

CHOICE
EXPERIENCES
OF

The kind dealings of God before, in, and after CONVERSION;
Laid down in six general Heads.

*Together with
Some brief Observations upon the same.*

Whereunto is added a description of true EXPERIENCE.

By J. TURNER wife to Cap. John Turner.

PSALM 66. 16.

*Come and hear all ye that fear God, and
I will declare what he hath done for my soul.*

LONDON,

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Par. D. G. A. Turner Estate
May 18, '42

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of the property of the estate of the deceased, and the same is to be sold and the proceeds thereof are to be paid to the executor of the estate of the deceased.

Witness my hand and seal this 18th day of May, 1942.

Attest:

Notary Public for the State of New York

My Commission Expires _____

Notary Public for the State of New York

My Commission Expires _____

Notary Public for the State of New York

My Commission Expires _____

Notary Public for the State of New York

My Commission Expires _____


Notary Public for the State of New York

My Commission Expires _____

Notary Public for the State of New York

My Commission Expires _____

To the Churches of Christ
who worship God in spirit and
truth according to the holy Com-
mandments of Jesus Christ, es-
pecially those my dear Brethren
at Newcastle, Barwick, and
Scotland, with whom I have
taken sweet counsel in the house
of God for several years past,
grace, mercy, truth and peace be
multiplied from the Lord Jesus
Christ.

RECIOUS and
dearly belo-
ved Brethren,
I know it would seem
A 2 very

The Epistle

very strange to you, if this following Treatise should come to your hands without my public owning of it, as indeed well it might, considering my neer relation to the Author; it is no small joy to my heart that the Lord is pleased in these our daies any way by any means to put his People in mind of that which they are so prone to forget,

Dedicatory.

forget, namely the various workings of God in their poor hearts, which you will find in this small Treatise in these three generall heads, viz. before, in, and since Conversion; we find the Lord in Scripture often calling upon his People to remember their unconverted state, *Isaiah 51. 1.*
Look unto the Rock whence ye are hewen, and

The Epistle

to the hole of the Pit
whence ye are digged;
And the Lord know-
ing our great inclinati-
on to forget it, he is
pleased to mind us of it,
as in *Eph.* 5. 8. *1 Cor.* 6.
10, 11. *Tit.* 3. 3. *Eph.* 2.
1, 2, 3. &c. The right
remembrance of our
unconverted state will
be a means to engage
our hearts to be much
in the thoughts of, and
highly to prize, that un-
speak-

Dedicatory.

speakable love and
grace of our God
through Iesus in quick-
ning us who were dead
in trespasses and sins, in
translating us from the
Kingdome of darkness
into the Kingdome of
his dear Son; the seri-
ous pondering of these
things in our hearts will
sweetly force us to break
forth into admiration
with the Apostle, *1 Ioh,*
3. 1, 2. Behold what
A 4 man-

The Epistle

manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be call'd the sons of God, &c. but when we forget the two former, we lose our communion with God in a great measure, and cannot prise and improve the kind dealings of our God with us, since Conversion, neither walk holily and obediently before the Lord in all his holy appointments

Dedictory.

ments as we ought, but leave an open door for Satan to deceive us with his manifold temptations, by which we suffer much harm.

My hearts desire and prayer to the Lord is, that he would give all his people more care and diligence in watching their own hearts and waies, for the increase of their spiritual strength and growth

The Epistle

growth in grace, lest they being led away for a time, with the error of the wicked, fall from their own steadfastness, 2 Pet. 3. 17, 18. as many have done to their greatest grief and loss. Beloved Brethren, you have here the labours of one of the weakest sex, which I trust will occasion you the more to give glory to God, in that his strength

Dedictory.

strength appears in
weakness; were it not
for the relation, I
should have much
room to speak of the
Author, and this Her
work, but I shall on-
ly say, Let Her works
praise Her; only I have
this that I cannot but
say, it was not Her
desire to publish it, Her
reasons She hath ex-
pressed. Secondly, So
far as one can speak
for

The Epistle

for another, I can say
for my Wife, in this
vvork she hath had lit-
tle help from men or
things, but I believe
much from the Lord;
and as the Lord hath
ovvned and much assi-
sted her in these her
great labors, I trust the
same povver vvill ac-
company each precious
heart, into vvhose hand
it may come, to make
it very profitable to
them.

Dedictory.

them. At my first sight of it, which was when it was neer finished, though I believe I was the first that saw it, next Her self, I was so surprized, knowing nothing of it before, that I knew not what to say of it; but upon consideration, and reviewing of it, I was very much pressed in spirit to publish it, and the more, in that the
oftner

The Epistle

oftner I read it, the more I was ingaged to it: I can say through mercy it hath been usefull and profitable to me; I hope it will be so to many more. It is no small mercy, nor low attainment, to be indeed an experienced Christian; it is easier to have fine words than a treasure in the heart: but seeing the kings daughter

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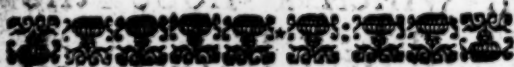
Dedicatory.

ter is all glorious within , and that our treasure there doth increase by the blessing of the Lord upon our diligent using that means ordained for that end ; this I trust will be a faithfull remembrancer and helper of us in this great work, in which I hope the Lord will have much glory , and his people comfort , which hath been

The Epistle Dedicatory.
been, is, and I trust e-
ver shall be, the ear-
nest desire of

*Your poor unwor-
thy Brother in
the Gospel,*

JOHN TURNER.



to

To the Reader.

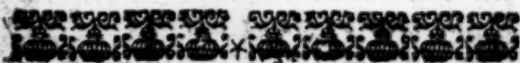
Reader,

How wilt find in this little Book something suitable to those various changes, and differing conditions that ordinarily poor souls are in, both before, in, and after conversion (only excepting a high degree of visible profaneness, and excess of riot, with heart, hand and tongue blaspheming the holy One of Israel, in an unconverted State) The Author was kept from that great degree of wickedness, as you will find in the beginning of Her book. If this shall come into the hands of any that yet live in those pollutions, and abominable corruptions, the Lord teach them to consider, that if Civility and Morality be too low and too little to stand the Soul in any stead in that day when God will judge the secrets of all men by Jesus Christ; Surely then sin and profaneness will be a miserable covering. This little Treatise is not intended principally for such Ishmaelites, but rather for those who have

To the Reader.

their faces Zion ward enquiring the way
thither, as also to such as have a name
and place where the honor of God dwells,
to all such I may say as an encourage-
ment to peruse this little Treatise, First,
as to the nature of it, 'tis that which
hath been digested, and it may well be
called Experience, it may be likened to
the Wine that Christ made of wa-
ter at the end of the Mariage-Feast,
being last it was better than the first,
though doubtles the first wine was good:
So I hope thou wilt find these few lines,
though good at the first, yet better at
the latter end, it being the privilege of
Saints to have their last works best, and
as they grow in years to grow in grace;
which the Lord grant unto all his, for
his mercies sake. Amen.

JOHN TURNER.



To

To the Christian Reader.



Cannot but take it
as a mercy from
the Lord, that
I have such an
opportunity to give my te-
stimony unto so worthy a
work as this is, which indeed
is a work that is not common
amongst men, being the
work of a Daughter of Zion,
nay I may say a Mother in
Israel, as it is said, *Many*
Daughters have done vertuously,
but She excelleth them all, there-
fore let Her own works praise
Her in the Gates of Zion,
who hath opened to the view

To the Christian

of all, not only the counsel of mans heart, which is as the deep waters, with the deceits therof, in which it may miscarry through the wisdom of the flesh, and the wiles of Satan, but also the wonderful wisdom of God, in the powerful operation of his Spirit, in the clear footsteps of his Grace, by a large and well grounded experience in the Lords bringing of a poor soul out of darkness into light, but in more particular thus; How far a soul may be wrought upon before it comes to Christ, with the lets and hinderances that keep

keep it off from the truth. Secondly, of the true work of Grace in the heart, and how this differs from the former. Thirdly, the souls closing with Christ, and the sweet enjoyments of the same. And lastly, the full establishment in the free Grace of God, and the manner how God effected this, with the several effects of all the aforesaid degrees of Grace, with so much variety of spiritual, soul-edifying matter, and all so full of life and delight to a gracious experienced heart, that as to my remembrance I have

To the Christian

not heard of the like, together with a large discovery of the most devilish and strong delusions of our times and the depth and danger of them, with the great Soul-losles of such as are taken with them, and also the nature and tendency of them, and Gods rich mercy in his recovering of his own out of them, and how by his wisdom he makes the same work for their good. So that good Reader, if thou wouldst see the very inside of a gracious soul, with the largest experience of the riches of Gods great dispensati-

sations of grace, here it is clearly presented in this small ensuing Treatise, being so seasonable for the time we live in, and so useful for all sorts of persons, wherein error and hereticks are discovered, the godly most sweetly edified, and the way of truth laid open for such as desire it, and many precious principles of truth soundly asserted; All which, with much more considered, did not only affect my soul, but caused me, with others, to press on the author hereof to publish the same for the good of Saints, and a glorious ex-

To the Christian Reader.
ample for all Christians to follow, in a serious observing the passages of Gods providence and grace, that they may be rich in experience of his free mercies and goodnes towards them, as that by which God holds our souls in life, and forms his image in us, with deep ingagements of love and zeal for his glory, into whose bosome I commit the godly Reader, and this good work unto his blessing upon thy heart, and remain the unworthiest of all Saints,

John Spilsbery.

To

To the Reader.

READER,

THis final Volume is the fruit of private Meditations relating to the inward man, which many neglecting have been like painted Sepulchers. It is a known Maxim, That the serious minded Christian is the most thriving, especially when the judgement ordereth the affection. Many persons are so drowned in confused and immethodical thoughts, that all their intentions are like an untimely birth, or the grass on the house top. This Author hath obtained favour of the Lord not
onely

onely to be esteemed a Daughter
of Sion, but also one that excel-
leth in grace, and to be counted a
Mother in the true Israel, of
which we have not many. I speak
not this by hearsay onely (though
her works praise her in the gates)
but having had for some years
more than ordinary experience of
her clear conceptions, and sound
judgement; being more naturally
given to the exercise of godliness
with sobriety than others, hath
stirred me up to testify some of her
spiritual worth, which hath been
very advantageous to many, but
especially to me. It was the great
sorrow of the Jewish woman to be
barren, being thereby deprived
of

of bringing forth Christ in his humane nature; and it is greater sorrow to ingenious Christians to be barren in Spirituals. This precious soul hath conceived and brought forth Spiritual fruit, to the view of good and bad; the matter containeth a gradual narration of the Lords various dealings with her many years, both in, and after Conversion, which speaketh forth much observance of Gods daily footsteps in the soul, the like have not commonly been seen; few have given themselves to be intent in discovering the beauty of Christ in the inward man. If this may be instrumental to bring forth the additional experiences
of

To the
of other Saints, it will be a good
president, especially in this age,
in which Saints time hath been
occasionally taken up more in
building the walls of the true Si-
on, than in discovering the trea-
sures of Grace and inward Glory
of Christ in the soul.

These inward Experiences
are not intended to limit others,
but to provoke self-examination
and spiritual quickning. They
are orderly laid down, though with
brevity; a word to the wise is e-
nough. Here is the danger of sin
discovered, the excellent safety
of a soul in Christ declared, the
duties of privileged Christians
manifested, and some cautions
laid

Reader.

laid down to take heed of a light and unsound Generation of men, whose deceits have been largely experienced. Be watchfull, lest you fall where others have stumbled, and are through Grace recovered and much established. Read with diligence, consider with patience; thy encouragements are many; that which is tendered being the fruit of the Spirit of grace doth invite and animate thee; to conclude, thy labor shall not be in vain in the Lord, to whom I commend thee in this and all thy spiritual labours, and remain

Dated at London
the 7th day of the
7th Moneth 1653.

Thy affectionat
and welwishing
friend

JOHN GARDNER.

A word from the Au-
thor to the
R E A D E R.

THese notes in the following discourse are some of the fruits of my labours written at several times in my Husbands absence, which may be some satisfaction as to my spending that time. I did intend them only for my own private use, as a remembrance of the old loving kindness of the Lord towards me, & twas not in the least in my thoughts that ever it should have been presented to a publick view, but after I had written the greatest part of it, showing it to my Husband, he had some thoughts to publish it, judging it might be profitable to some precious souls which, though it be written but in a broken, scattering way, and I am conscientious to my self of too much weakness and unworthiness to be an Instrument for the
good

To the Reader.

good of souls, or to propagate the least truth of the Lord Jesus, yet I shall be willing to submit to better Judgements, hoping through the Blessing of God it may be useful, knowing from my own experience I have received much from the Lord by reading: but besides the sense of my own unworthiness, as I had some discouraging thoughts as to my writing of it at the first, so I have met with the like as to my giving way to the publishing of it. As first, I thought I might seem to some to walk in an untrodden path, I having never seen any thing written before in this manner and method; but whatever entertainment it may find with such, knowing from whom I have received it, I am well satisfied, my foot-steps will be found as for matter, so for method and manner, among the foot-steps of the flock of Christ, where I desire to feed besides the Shepherds Tents, Cam. 1.8. Another thought which did discourage me was, knowing I must expect to encounter with Satan in relation to it several waies, but believing that which way soever he appears whether to abase or exalt me in my own thoughts, the
Lord

Lord will not be wanting with strength to
 withstand and resist him, and that I shall
 with advantage be delivered from his
 snares and temptations: Thus resolving
 to commit my self and it to the blessing of
 the Almighty, desiring it may be accep-
 ted of the Saints as the widows mite, and
 that what is weak may be covered with
 love, is the desire of me the unworthy
 Servant of Christ,

IANE TURNER.



The



THE MANNER HOW I WAS PUT UPON
THE WRITING THESE FOLLOWING
LINES, WITH THE REASONS AND
GROUNDS FOR DOING THE SAME.

THROUGH the good pro-
vidence of God, I li-
ved in Newcastle for
some time, where I
received many precious mercies
from the Lord, which I desire
may never be forgotten by me;
and being under a bodily afflicti-
on, the Lord was pleased so to
visit me with his loving kind-
ness, that I can truly say, it was
a time of joy to my soul: and in-
deed

(2)
deed I never enjoyed so much
sweet communion with God, for
so long a time together, as I did
at that time; for, for the space
of seven or eight weeks together,
I was in a continual converse and
exchanging love with God, as it
were lodging and living in the
bosome of Christ; and truly I do
not remember that in all that
time I had one considerable in-
terruption; which condition was
so sweet and joious to me, that it
did exceedingly grieve me to
think that ever I should forget
the particulars thereof, finding
from sad experience, that (though
I can never forget the substance
of such things, yet) I am prone
to forget the particulars, the re-
membrance of which I find to be
much for the glory of God, and
my own comfort and profit, espe-
cially in times of trial and temp-
tations.

tations; upon the consideration of which I thought it might be a good way to write them down.

And calling to mind some of the old loving kindneses of God towards me, I resolved to write down some of them: For I do believe I cannot remember the hundreth part of the kind dealings of God towards me, so as to write them all: but though I cannot remember all; yet I may remember some, and those I judge most considerable I resolved to write them down.

But as I had many thoughts of encouragement to do it, so I had some thoughts that did discourage me; As

First, I thought it would be very hard, if not impossible, for me to remember that which hath been so long since (so as to write it) But the Lord was pleased to

C. 3

fa

satisfy me in this, that my ends being such as were agreeable to his will, he would according to his promise, in my endeavours, bring things to my remembrance: and truly I was confirmed in believing he would so do, from my own experience, for I do not remember that ever I set my self seriously to meditate on the former kindness of God towards me, but I was much refreshed by it, and remembred that which I seemed to have forgotten.

A Second thought which did discourage me was, fearing lest through forgetfulness as I knew I should leave out something which was, so I might possibly write something which was not, which I would not by any means willingly do; this I discerned to be a temptation for fear of hypocrisy, but God was pleased to

(5)
to satisfy me in it, with this resolution, that what I did I would do as in his presence, and that if there were any thing which was clear to my remembrance, that I could not bring in without something which was doubtfull, I would rather leave out the one, than write the other, much less write any thing which was a plain addition, and in this resolution I set upon it, believing that God would assist and help me, desiring not to give way to discouraging thoughts; for I have often experienced this, that if in writing, speaking, or doing of any thing whereby God may be glorified, we should give way to temptations and discouragements, we should do nothing at all: For Satan and our own hearts will not be wanting to us, that way.

But with grief of heart I must confess, that the greatest discouragements that I have met with have been from the Saints themselves (I do not mean only as to this particular, but as to other spiritual duties also) by which I trust I have learned in some measure to take the more heed how I discourage others; and doubtless Saints ought to take great heed lest by their giving just occasion of discouragement they quench the Spirit of God in them, *2 Thes. 5. 19. quench not the Spirit*; which that we may not do, we ought to endeavour for a Spirit of discerning, and for such a carriage by which we may best draw forth the hearts of others in spiritual things; not that we should draw or put persons upon that which they have not received, or that we should encourage any who
put

put themselves on such things, but rather reprove them, especially those who so act in a publique way, such as the Apostle speaks of, who would be preachers of the Law, when indeed they know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm, 1 Tim. 1. 7. the hearing of which hath been no small burthen to my spirit. I wish from my soul, that not onely particular Saints may be faithful in the discharge of their duty, to reprove such, but also that the Church would put forth their Authority for the calling of them in, and that such brethren onely whose gifts are approved of by the Church, may exercise their gifts publicquely, and no other, that the Saints may not be burthened, nor the world blaspheme. I shall say no more as to this, believing that

the Lord will instruct those that are called to that work, namely to judge who are fit to be teachers, desiring only to caution Saints to take heed of casting stumbling blocks in each others way: For doubtless, though its one of the last, yet its not the least trial, that after we have in a great measure overcome the world, the devil, and our own hearts, we should meet with lets and discouragements from one another.

Its that indeed which is suitable to an imperfect state in which we are, and by which we may learn, as to live more singly on God, so also to presse after, and long for, that perfect State in which we shall be at the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ. I might enlarge much in this matter, but I intend only to hint at things, desiring the Lord to stir

up

up the hearts of some more able,
 to enlarge upon it, knowing there
 is great need that Saints should be
 exhorted to this duty, namely not
 to discourage but to, encourage
 one another in all good things; &
 I desire that we may set before us
 that exhortation of the Apostle,
*Gal. 5.26: Let us not be desirous of
 vain glory, provoking one another,
 envying one another,* From whence
 I observe, that to be desirous of
 vain glory, makes way for a spi-
 rit of envy, and so to provoke
 and grieve one another.

The consideration of that Scri-
 pture with *Jam. 4.5.* may through
 the blessing of God be very use-
 full to Saints for this purpose: for
 questionles a slighting of the gifts
 and grace of God in others, doth
 many times arise off a desire of
 vain glory, and a spirit of envy.

*The first Note of Experience
of the good Providence of
God towards mee in a state
of Ignorance and Darknes
before Conversion.*

IT pleased the Lord I was civil-
ly brought up from a child,
and kept from such gross evils
as persons meerly civil do not
allow, but otherwaies very
vain; and that which instru-
mentally kept me from such
things, as I conceived, was (to-
gether with my civil educati-
on) a desire of happiness, and a
fear of misery, having a general
notion that sinne was attended
with misery; for I remember,
when I had done any thing
that I thought was sin, I was
presently

presently under great fear and terror; to take off which, and also to attain happiness in the end, I thought I was to be exercised in some kind of religion, but being very ignorant, I made no inquiry what religion was, but took it for granted that that was religion which was then in force from King and Bishops, and so going on I grew very superstitiously zealous in all things suitable to the service Book, or a Cathedrall kind of Worship, and I thought the more I abounded in fasting, book prayer, and observation of daies and times, mourning and afflicting my self for sin, the better it was; so that I think I did exceed most that I knew in that way for blind zeal, and superstitious devotion: yet at this very time I thought my self far from

Popery

Popery, and did alwaies oppose that with much zeal, and I am sure with much ignorance.

Then being acquainted with some who were then called Puritans, I began to perceive that there was some difference betwixt that which I practised, and that which was done by them; and my observation of their carriages, and hearing them speak such language as I was altogether a stranger to, did so far work upon me, that I began to question my own condition, and oft times when I had done my long book prayers, though I had scarce ever heard of praying without a book, yet I would in a poor broken manner complain to God that I was in some fear that what I did was not according to his will, and if it were not, I did beg of him that he would

would bring me to the knowledge of the truth whatever I did undergo for attaining of it: But then sometimes I thought my condition good enough, and though I was never given to rail or speak evil of such persons, yet I thought they made more ado than they need to have done, and that God did not require so much strictnesse as they seemed to plead for.

But hearing them speak much of knowledge, and of the danger of ignorance, and knowing my self to be very ignorant, I began to be more frequent in reading the Scriptures, and hearing sermons; but my understanding not being yet opened, it was to little effect; for I remember I was at this time like a stock or stone as to the true understanding of that which I read or heard,
that

that I can truly say as the Prophet in Psal. 73. 22. *So foolish was I and ignorant, even as a Beast before thee; and yet at this time I was something in affection, as when I heard any thing of the judgements of God against sin, I should tremble, and when any thing of the mercy and goodness of God, or the love and sweetness of Jesus Christ, my heart would melt (as I thought) yet I understood nothing, so as to have it seated in the understanding and judgement.*

This in general I do remember as to that state.

Some

(45)
*Some brief Observations
from this note of Expe-
rience.*

First, concerning my be-
ing kept from sin by a de-
sire of happiness, and fear
of misery: From thence I
observe,

*That in the daies of ignorance, **
before we have received grace to
restrain us from sin, its a mercy
to be restrained by something
else: And truly to me its a
mercy so considerable, that
I desire to bless the Lord for
it as long as I live.

Secondly

Secondly, concerning my seeking after and framing to my self some kind of Religion, from thence I observe,

X *That its naturall for persons to make after some kind of Religion, and rather than they will worship nothing, they will worship, Samaritan like, they know not what, John 4.22.*

Thirdly, concerning my opposing Popery, when my self lived in the practice of the same thing for the nature of it, from thence I observe,

X *That a person may oppose an error, and yet live at that time in the same error for the nature of it,*

it, though in a lower degree, and not know it; And that not only persons totally ignorant, but Saints also, if they take not good heed: for I have experienced this more times than once.

Fourthly, concerning my complaint and prayer to God in relation to truth; from thence I observe,

That a person before conversion may (for ought I know) truly pray, and that from a secret work of God upon the heart. And therefore though I cannot from Scripture-rule exhort such to pray, so neither from

D expe-

ence can I forbid them, but rather reioyce to see the hearts of any run out in such a way.

Fiftly, concerning my being so much affected with truth, though I understood it not, from thence I observe,

That ignorant persons in hearing truth may have their reason so far touched, that they may assent to it, and be much affected with it, and yet understand nothing so as to have it seated in the heart and judgement; and because it is not seated in the heart and iudgement, that I conceive is the reason why ignorant persons are so uncertain and so unconstant in their

their thoughts concerning
 truth, and why many that
 live a long time under much
 means, yet continue very
 ignorant, it may be *ever lear-*
ning, and never able to come to the
knowledge of the truth, 2Ti. 3. 7.
 and as the feed upon the sto-
 ny ground withred away be-
 cause it had no root; So truth
 not being rooted in the heart
 and iudgement, though it
 spring up in much affection;
 yet it comes to nothing. And
 indeed ignorant persons
 many times are sooner affect-
 ed, and doe seem to have
 more affection than others;
 in the reason of that (I conceive)

is the same also with that of the seed upon the stony ground, it sprang up suddenly, because it had not depth of earth; so its natural for ignorant persons to spring forth in affection, they having as it were nothing else to do but onely to be affected; their strength running all in one vein, or in one Chancel, they spend all in affection, while others that have more understanding have many other things to do, all the faculties of their souls being exercised, their strength is dis-

perfected

perſed into many veins ;
 weighing and pondering
 things in the heart and iudg-
 ment , that it may have
 depth to root and ſettle
 there; as its ſaid of *Mary*, ſhee
pondred thoſe things in her heart,
 Luke 2. 19. ſo they are trea-
 ſuring it up in their hearts,
 having in their *treafury things*
new and old. Mat. 12. 35. and
 13. 52. and a little affection
 where there is iudgement, is
 better than a great deal with-
 out iudgement; yet much
 affection with a ſound iudg-
 ment is beſt of all.

(22)
The second note of Experience,
How I was brought to see my
self in a miserable state by Na-
ture, and convinced of sin by
the Law, and so converted to du-
ty, labouring for life by doing,
though at that time in my own
thoughts far from owning such
a thing.

BY providence hearing a Mi-
nister of the Nation who was
then called a Puritan, whom
though I used often to hear,
yet I could truly say as the Pro-
phet in Dan. 10. 8. I heard, but I
understood not; and as I was once
hearing of him, very suddenly
I thought I did discern and un-
derstand things more clearly
and

(43)
and more distinctly than ever I did before that time, being much affected with it, and did then own God in it, having many such thoughts as these, that as it was said of *Lydia*, *Act. 16. 14.* that now the Lord had opened my understanding, and now I hoped I should have more knowledge, and delight more in hearing and reading, whereas before it was wearysome to me, because I did not understand any thing but in a confused manner.

After this I had a great delight to hear this man, and though I thought it much on any other occasion to go one mile on foot, yet to hear him I could go three, and back again the same day frequently; and by his Ministry I was brought to see the superstitious vanity of my former zeal,

01 D 4 and

and laid it aside; and I remember that at this time I had such affectionate heart-workings towards God and godliness, and such a hatred of all sin, according to what I then knew, that I did many times in my serious thoughts chuse rather to dy than live, meerly upon that account, because I would not sin against God, knowing my self subject thereunto.

And though I cannot say that at this time I had faith in God, so as to believe his Love to me on Gospel grounds, for I was totally ignorant of any such thing many years after, yet I had good thoughts of God from that glimmering light which I then had, and which did produce in me much love to him, as I cannot but so judge.

But no sooner was I brought
to

(23)
to this, but Satan was ready to assault me, and set upon me with this horrid temptation, to question the Being of *God*, and I remember it usually came upō me when I was alone, but especially as I was going by my self to hear the aforesaid Minister, insomuch that it did exceedingly trouble me, and I then discerned it to be a temptation, and did resist and labour against it, drawing arguments as I went in the fields from the very works of Creation, to confirm my self in this truth, that there is a *God*, & that it should not be in vain for me or any to serve him; and earnestly crying to *God* against it, through Grace I was not overcome by it, but had a supply of strength until it was removed; and I was no more troubled with it in many years after.

So

So I continued a constant hearer of this man, and other such like, for some years, by which I came to see my self in a miserable State by nature, and was convinced of sin by the Law; but being very ignorant of the Lord Jesus, and their doctrine, being for the most part such as was suitable to the old covenant, instead of going to Christ for life, I was brought to a great degree of labour and travell for life and happiness, by doing (though at that time in my own thoughts farre from owning such a thing) being as exact and strict in all my waies (I think I may say) as it was possible for a poor creature to be, but the more strict I was, still looking through the glasse of the law, the more my bondage was increased; For I could see nothing but an addition of sin in all that I did;

the

(87)
the law still calling for a perfect
righteousness;

Then I began to be very much
troubled, and in a great amaze-
ment & perplexity of spirit, fear-
ing I should perish forever; then I
had thoughts to discover my con-
dition to some to have advise
from them, but meeting with ma-
ny discouragements, did not, but
kept it in my own brest, disco-
vering no more but what I could
not hide, which was onely my
outward appearance much dif-
fering from what formerly it was,
which did occasion some to say
that I was neer a distraction, they
not knowing what condition I
was in.

And truly my condition was
so sad that I was afraid of a di-
straction my self; for I thought
it impossible to continue long in
that condition, and not be di-
stracted,

strated, which fear did occasi-
 on me to apply my self to some
 means of comfort, whereas be-
 fore I was not willing to hearken
 to any thing that way: the means
 I used was chiefly reading & prai-
 er, by which it pleased the Lord
 I came to some dark apprehensi-
 ons concerning Jesus Christ, be-
 ing perswaded there was some-
 thing of that nature, which if I
 could get a right understanding
 of, my condition would be much
 better; but fearing lest I should
 sink under my burthen, temp-
 tations comming on me like the
 waves of the Sea, I was forced as
 I went about my occasions often
 to cry to God, like the Disciples
 in another case, *Lord save me, else I*
perish, *Mat. 8. 25.* I thought
 many times, I was even sinking
 under my burthen, and I did
 believe there was no help but
 only

only in the Lord, and that he was able to do it, but whether he would do it, or whether he would save or damn me at last, I knew not, neither did I think it possible for me ever to have known that, except it were by some extraordinary way, which very few did attain unto.

But by degrees I began to stay upon some promises through such considerations as these; first, I thought it could not stand with the goodness of God to damn a poor soul that had such heart-workings and desires after him as I had, having much in my thoughts those words of *Sampson's* Mother, *Judges 13. 23.* I thought that if he did intend to destroy me he would never have given me such desires after him, & preserved me till now; and then that promise, *Mat. 5. 6.* did much support

port me, for I thought that if ever poor creature did hunger and thirst after righteousness, I did; these promises and considerations, with some confused apprehensions that I had concerning the Lord Jesus, did much raise me; the thoughts I had of him were such as these, I did believe that the Justice of God must be satisfied for sin; and that nothing could satisfy his justice but a perfect righteousness, now I thought I was to be very strict and circumspect in all my waies, if it were possible, to perform such a righteousness, but what I could not do, Christ had done for me, and when I had done any thing that I thought was sin, I could not apply Christ till I had repented, that was till I had mourned, fasted and prayed, afflicting my self in such a mea-

measure as I thought might stand with the not destroying or prejudicing nature, for there God would have mercy rather than sacrifice, and Jesus Christ would make up that which was wanting: so that Christ was my stay, though it was through a very carnal and wrong apprehension.

But though I thought I must be so qualified and fitted for Christ before I could receive him, and be made happy by him, yet I knew there was no mercy to be found without him, nor no life but in him: In this condition I lived some years more, and grew very cheerful & confident (as I think it was possible to be, under such an apprehension) but yet my confidence was alwaies more or lesse, as I was more or less strict in my waies, and sometimes though I had been never so strict yet I was
subject

(34)
subject to fear lest I had not done
as much as it was possible for me
to do, for otherwaies I thought
Christ would be nothing at all to
me; yet my hopes were greater
than my fears; and I was resolv-
ed, if I perished, I would perish
here at the feet of Christ: and
now I did not only see that pos-
sible which before I thought im-
possible, but I had great hopes
and much confidence most times.

This apprehension, though it
be that which is far below the
glory of the free grace of God in
the Gospel, yet it did present
Christ very lovely to me, and did
produce in me a real love to him;
as I dare not but so judge, con-
sidering how I stood affected to,
and delighted in, whatever I
knew to be his will: Though I
must confess I think at the first
the great wheel that carryed all
about

about, was my own good; yet I am very confident that at this time I had a real love to, & delight in, the Lord Jesus Christ, and his commandements were not grievous to me, but I did approve of them to be the most excellent things, because approved of by the Lord; and I well remember I was so far taken off from delighting in sin, that I think I may say I did hate it with a perfect hatred, as that which was in itself the only object of hatred, as it was against God, and all my delight was to be with those that I thought did excell in vertue, and I could not bear wicked persons, but their waies and practices were odious to me; yet still I say my condition at this time was a condition of extreme bondage and below the Gospel.

I shall say no more of it, but
E only

only this, that what I have here
written I think I may say is not
the hundredth part of the labors
and travells of my soul whiles I
lived in that condition, and if
I should go about to write it all, I
know not how nor when to
make an end. But God was plea-
sed in mercy to free me from that
bondage by the manifestation of
his love and grace through his
Son, to whom be all praise and
glory for ever more, *Amen.*

Some

*Some brief Observations
from this second note of
Experience.*

First, Concerning the person by whom my experience in these things began, which was one (as I judge) not rightly called or sent to preach the Gospel, he not being related to a true Church, though otherwise (I hope) a godly man according to that measure of light he had received.

From whence I observe,
That it is possible for a godly

man in times of ignorance and darkness to be a Minister of a false Church.

Secondly, I observe, That though it be not the work of a false Ministry, neither is it the way of God to convert souls by, yet accidentally or providentially something may be done that way by them, especially in times of persecution, where there is not a true Ministry abroad; as indeed I am much inclined to own the work of conversion to be begun in me at this time, and that for these reasons.

First, because now was the day of Gods power now

only to make me willing,
 but there was some change
 wrought in the whole soul;
 and every faculty of it,
 which before was dead, had
 now some life and motion
 in things relating to God
 and godliness; as the under-
 standing was opened, so the
 will was changed, and made
 willing to submit to truth,
 and to imbrace the waies of
 life, though it were through
 the greatest difficulty, yet in
 much darkness; and then the
 affections were taken, and
 though there were but a lit-
 tle glimpse of truth appeared,
 yet there was a love to it,
 E 3 and

and delight in it, and a great hatred of the contrary; all which I apprehend could not be but from some seeds of the Gospel, though through false teaching, there was not that blessed fruit of ioy and peace in believing; also the Memory was active and busie to retain truth, so that here was some change wrought in the whole soul as aforesaid.

A second reason is, because when I lay under conviction of sin by the Law, and was ready to sink under my burthen, that which did suport and uphold my spirit was the Lord Jesus Christ, though
my

my apprehensions of him were not according to the Gospel, as to the glory of the free grace therein contained.

A third reason is, from the consideration of that fruit which did appear at that time, which was an intire love to Christ, and a conversation suitable thereunto, according to the light then received: For there was not only a doing good, but a love to it, and delight in it; and there was not only a forbearing evil, but a hatred and indignation against it. It being thus with me at this time.

time, I cannot but much tender persons in the like condition, who do manifest by a good conversation, a reall work of God upon their hearts, though living in a discovery below the privileges of the Gospel: yet not so to tender them, as not to tender the glory of truth above them, being true to my principles in keeping a strict separation from them in relation to their visible and publick worship, it being contrary to the rule of the Gospel.

Three Observations from the three foregoing reasons.

First,

First, concerning the Change wrought in the whole soul, from thence I observe,

That there may be a Change wrought in the whole soul to life and godliness, long before that soul comes to enjoy life by believing.

Secondly, concerning my being staid upon Christ when I was like to sink under my burthen, from thence I observe,

That a soul may cleave to, and really stay upon Christ, through some apprehension which presents him lovely, though it may be that which doth not present him so lovely as indeed he is.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, concerning that entire love I had to Christ and his waies, from thence I observe,

That though the love of Christ manifested to a soul be that which ordinarily begets love in the soul to Christ, yet its possible there may be a real love to him, before there is such a manifestation.

Now having minded many particulars as to my condition at that time when I did experience these things, I cannot altogether omit the kindness of God towards me in relation to persecutions, which though it were but
small

small comparatively with some others, yet it was more than some met with, and it was that indeed which did require some strength from the Lord to undergo it with comfort, in which he not being wanting to me, I Judge it ought not to be forgotten by me; and as I had comfort in it at that time present, so I am still well satisfied that I suffered not as an evill doer, because what I did then, was upon a conscientious account, according to that light received. I could mention many particulars, but

but I forbear, heartily desiring that it may never be laid to their charge. But this book being intended by me as a remembrancer of the former dealings of God towards me, I think it not altogether useles, as to remember the time I was in that condition, & the manner how I was brought from it, so also the time when I was brought from it, and that was after the Bishops were quite taken away in the beginning of the sitting of the late Synod. And here I desire to remember with thankfulness to God, that I was not inured by the change of

times and laws ; For at that very time when the *Presbyterian* party, so called, began to reign , and J might have reigned with them, and enjoyed smiles from them, being convicted of a further discovery of truth J left them, and was content to become a scorn and a by-word amongst them ; Though J must confess J had much respect from some of them all along, yet my sufferings from that party were far more than the former. J could here mention many particulars , but J forbear, desiring, as for the former, it may not be

be charged upon them ; only these general hints I hope will be sufficient to bring particulars to my remembrance, for these things ought not to be forgotten by me, because in the remembrance of them I find my heart much engaged in praises to God, and that several waies ; one way, and that not the least, is, that God hath broken their power. For indeed I must needs say, that according to my observation and experience, I have seen as persecuting a spirit in them as ever I did in the former, and they did appear as
bit-

bitter, if not more, against such as were called *Anabaptists*, than ever the Bishops did against those that were called *Puritans*, considering their time and power: For as their time was short, so when their power was highest, there was alwaies a party which did a little aw them. I shall say no more of these things, but that as I desire for ever to blesse the Lord in the remembrance of them, so I do likewise desire that God would destroy, or at least keep under, every persecuting spirit,

un-

under what name or title
 forever called, till he is
 pleased to give them re-
 pentance.

The

*The third Note of Experience,
How I was brought to apprehend and believe the free Grace of God in the Gospel, and in believing to receive the assurance of the love of God.*

IN order to this experience I cannot omit to write something concerning the reading of a book, by which as a means in the hand of God I received these never to be forgotten mercies. After I had livd about five or six years a strict professor, being very confident and settled upon the Lees of Legal Righteousness, it pleased the Lord there came a man to the Town where I lived, whom though he was generally
F
reputed

reputed to be an honest man, yet he was much opposed as holding grosse errors in his Judgement, and hearing many speak very bitterly against him, I did much ponder it in my heart, not daring (as Nicodemus spake concerning Christ, *John 7.50.*) to judge before I heard, and therefore I resolved to speak with him, which accordingly I did, and found him speaking such things as I never heard before, which I then ignorantly judged to be errors; the things he chiefly spake of, was about Free Grace, the nature of the Gospel, and the New Covenant; and though I was not able to gain say the truth of what he spake, yet for fear of those evill consequences that a carnal heart might draw from them, I could not receive it. But after some discourse, in much opposition, yet not bitter against

gainst him, in the close he desired to lend me a book, in which (he said) concerning the things he spake I might find better satisfaction than he could give, being but weak in expression; so I took it home with me, but being much afraid of error, I was at a great dispute in my own spirit whether I should read it or not; but fearing lest I should seem to shut my eyes against the light, at last I came to this result, that I would read it, but first set apart a day by fasting and prayer to seek the Lord, that what was truth in it I might embrace, and that he would keep and preserve me from error (which accordingly I did) and finding the drift and scope of the book was to exalt God, and lay low the Creature, I was much affected with it, as also with some

other particulars; but on the other hand these Ministers (whose words were then as Oracles to me) did so much cry out against it, charging all to take heed of it, it being full of errors of dangerous consequences, that when I came about the middle of it I was so surprised with fear of carnal liberty, meerly by their words, that I durst read it no further, but sent it home again, resolving to stick to my old principles, and so resolved I was, that I judged it my duty, and accordingly did praise the Lord, that I had escaped that snare and stumbling block which it was like to be to me, till about half a year after, these forementioned Ministers not being satisfied to speak against those books in private only, but brought them in to their Pulpits reading particu-

lar passages, which as they read and applyed it, was contrary to the sense of it, and sometimes I thought they spake more than was true, which did occasion me to desire the book again for my better satisfaction: but they not being allowed to be sold at that time, it was hard to get any of them, but through mercy I got one, and then I found they did not deal faithfully, but did wrest and draw false consequences contrary to the drift and scope of it, all which occasioned serious thoughts in me, remembering when I first read it I laid it aside meerly from a spirit of fear and prejudice occasioned by their words, and not that I was able to disprove it from Scripture grounds; then remembering those words of the Apostle, *1 Thes. 5. 21. Try all things, and*

beld fast that which is good, I
 thought it my duty to lay aside
 all slavish fear and prejudice,
 and to try it exactly by the
 Scriptures, believing that as it
 was Gods way to try, so he would
 assist me in it, which he was plea-
 sed to do, and as I read I began
 to be much affected, and I
 thought it was glad tidings and
 good news if it were true, but I
 thought it was too good to be
 true; for I could not then be-
 lieve that God was so free of his
 Christ, as to give him to any o-
 ther sinners but to such as were
 qualified, fitted, and prepared
 for him, or that the way to glo-
 ry was so easy as he seemed to
 mak it, for if it were so, then
 all that labour and travel which
 I had been a long time in, was no-
 thing, which I could by no means
 yield to at that time. For as
 Christ

Christ once said to the Jews that Publicans and Harlots enter into the Kingdom before them, *Mat. 21. 31.* so truly I found it so hard to lay down my own legal righteousness, and to submit to the righteousness of God by Faith, according to *Rom. 10. 3.* that I was like to stick here, when such as were more profane might receive the truth sooner. But seriously weighing these with some other such like Scriptures, as *Rom. 4. 4.* and *5. 8.* *Ephe. 2.* through grace I was in a great measure convinced and brought to see that I had been exceedingly mistaken in my understanding and applying of Jesus Christ, and whereas I thought I had attained a good degree of knowledge, I now saw my self to be very ignorant, and must begin again to learn the first principles of the o-

racles of God, which to suffer so
 much loss was very hard to me (at
 the first) but God was pleased by
 degrees to strip me of all, and to
 shew me such a beauty and excel-
 lency in the Lord *Jesus* above it,
 that I was made not only willing
 but joyous to lay down all at his
 feet, and I trust could truly say
 with the Apostle, *That what was*
gain to me, I counted loss for Christ,
yea doubtless and I count all things
but losse for the excellency of the
knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord,
for whom I have suffered the loss of
all things, and do count them but
dung, that I may win Christ, and be
found in him, &c. Phil. 3: 7, 8, 9,
 &c. and as God had exalted Christ
 to be a Prince and a Saviour, *Acts*
5. 31. and had chosen him as the
 only excellent one in whom he
 had placed life and salvation for
 his

people, *Mat.* 12. 18. so my soul did approve of it to be the most excellent way, and I trust could truly say with the Spouse, he is the chiefest of ten thousand, ye he is one, and there is not another, *Cant.* 5. 10. *Act.* 4. 12. and the more I came to apprehend the glory of the Gospel in the free tenders and invitations of Christ to sinners, the more still I was affected with it, and did admire it, and seeing the tenders of grace so free, and the invitations so general that whosoever would come might come and take of the water of life freely, *Esay* 55. 1. *Revel.* 22. 17. and that whosoever came to Christ he would in no wise cast out, *John* 6. 37. by which word [*come*] I understood believing, vers. 40. and then considering the nature of the covenant, that it is a covenant of grace free
and

and without all conditions on the creatures part, and that the conditions stand only between God and Christ, as I then understood by these Scriptures, *Esay* 53. 10. *Psal.* 89. Through these considerations I was not only encouraged, but the abounding love of Christ did compell and constrain me to cast my self upon him for life and salvation, in a way of believing, and not in a way of working; and to the praise of his grace as I desire never to forget it. I did at this time receive the assurance of the love of God in believing the free and full pardon of all my sins; That God had laid them all upon Christ, and beholding the travail of his soul, was satisfied, *Esay* 53. 11. and well pleased with me in him *Mat.* 3. 17. and that they were all carried into the wilderness of forgetfulness.

fulness, and buried in Oblivion, according to that type of Christ, *Levit. 16. 21, 22.* and that they were washed away in his blood, *Revel. 1. 5.* and that God would remember them no more, *Heb. 8. 12.* and *10. 17.* These Scriptures, with some others of the like nature, were by the Spirit of God set home so powerfully upon my heart at that time, that truly I cannot express the joyfulness and sweetness of my condition, not being able to contain my self from calling to others to tell them what God had done for my soul, how he had brought me out of bondage into the glorious liberty of adoption, and filled me with joy and peace in believing, yea with joy unspeakable and full of glory, *Rom. 15. 13.* *1 Pet. 1. 8.* and I remember for a long time after I did delight

delight to be almost continually speaking or meditating of the glory of the free grace of God in the Gospel, and of his bounty and goodness to poor sinners, and to me the chief of sinners, for I know more evill by my self than I do by any other, yet doubtless I can say as it was once said of the *Thessalonians*, The Gospel came not to me at that time in word only, but in power, and much assurance, and joy in the Holy Ghost, 1 *Thes.* 1. 5. and whereas formerly I thought that to receive such a principle was the ready way to be loose and carnal, I did believe that as justification and sanctification are inseparable, 2 *Thes.* 2. 13. and that as one end of Christs death was as well to redeem his people from all iniquity and the power of sin, as from the punishment of sin,

sin, so the power of grace was more
 strong and able to keep me from
 sin, than all the legal bands and
 slavish fears in the world, *Tit. 2. 11.*
 and though possibly I might meet
 with some temptations of that
 nature, yet to the praise of his
 grace, I can truly say I never
 found my heart more engaged
 for God and godliness, and more
 disengaged from sin, than now,
 which the Lord keep me so and
 all his, *Amen.*

Some

*Some brief Observations
from this third note of
Experience.*

First, concerning my confidence in my former condition, before I knew these things, from thence I observe,

X *That persons may be very confident on false grounds,*

And that it is not the confidence that makes the condition good, but the grounds of it.

For though still I say I am inclined to own the work of conversion to be begun in me

at

at that time before said, by
 some accidental or provi-
 dential scatterings of the seed
 of the Gospel, yet, through
 false teaching, those seeds
 were so buried under the a-
 shes of legal righteousness,
 that there was a greater po-
 wer required to blow off
 those ashes, and to carry on
 that work, than if it
 had never been begun,
 according to that foremen-
 tioned place, *Matth. 21.*
31. how hard then must
 it needs be to begin that
 work where there is only
 such a righteousness? from
 thence I observe,

That

— That Legal righteousnessse
 (where the work of conversion is
 begun in a soul) is a great ob-
 struction to the carrying on, and
 perfecting of that work.

Secondly, Concerning
 the manner of the dealings
 of God with me in the
 manifestation of his Love
 and Grace, which was at
 this time by reading, as in-
 deed however God is plea-
 sed to deal with others,
 yet with me, I cannot say
 but what I have received I
 have alwaies received by and
 through some means, from
 whence I observe,

— That it is good to wait on
 God

God in the use of all means; for though the holy One of Israel is not limited, yet ordinarily he works by means, and leaves no ground in holy Scripture to expect him out of means.

Thirdly, Concerning my idolizing those fore-mentioned Ministers, being kept by it from reading or hearing any other doctrine but theirs, from thence I observe,

That it is a dangerous thing to esteem of persons above what is meet, and to be implicitly lead by them in spiritual things.

Fourthly, Concerning my not receiving the doctrine of Free Grace for fear of carnal

liberty, from thence I observe,

That such as are ignorant of the Free Grace of God are subject to this mistake, to think it the way to sin, when indeed there is no true holiness without it.

Fiftly, concerning its being so hard to me to lay down my own righteousness, &c. and yet that I should do it with so much Joy, when I saw cleerly the righteousness of Christ to excell all, from thence I observe,

That though it is a very hard thing

thing for persons (eminent in legal righteousness) to lay it down, and submit to the righteousness of God by faith, yet the appearance of the transcendent excellency of Christs righteousness, will make them do it with joy.

Sixthly, Concerning my being so much affected with the Free Grace of God at my first receiving it, that I could not but declare it to others, from thence I observe,

That the glad tidings of the Gospel being applyed by the Spirit of Christ, so glads the heart, that when the soul first

receives it its like fire that cannot be hid.

Seventhly, Concerning the effect of the Free Grace of God upon my heart, engaging me more to himself, and disengaging me more from sin, from thence I observe,

That there is no engagement so strong to keep the soul from sinning against God, as the Free Grace of God, nor nothing more endeers the heart to God; Yet doubtless where there is nothing but only the notion of it, there is the greatest advantage to Satan that can be, and usually such persons are the worst of all others.

For though Gospel bonds be the best to be tyed from sin by, yet in many respects its better to be tyed by Legal bonds than none at all; yet for Saints to be so tyed is not only carnal and below their privilege, but a great dishonour to Christ, and an undervaluing of the Free Grace of God, which above all things ought to be exalted by us, as that alone by which we are truly exalted, and therefore ought to ly as the strongest engagements on Saints hearts to keep them from sin; and

seeing all that we are, have,
 or ever shall have as to hap-
 piness here, or glory here-
 after, is all of Grace, I de-
 sire for ever to admire it,
 and to live in the glory of
 it by faith; But this I
 find of all other the hard-
 est Lesson, yea so hard,
 that unto this day I have
 cause to complain of an
 unbelieving heart in many
 things, and I have often
 experienced that to bring
 over the heart to believe,
 and to keep it up in be-
 lieving, is no less than the
 mighty power and gift of
 God, *John 6. 65. Phil*

1. 29. *Ephesi.* 1. 19. yet
 in this I have strong con-
 solation, that I am kept
 by his power, 1 *Peter*
 1. 5. and he hath said,
 I will never leave thee,
 nor forsake thee, *Hebrews*
 13. 5. and as the Lord
 once said to *Peter*, Though
 Satan should desire to wi-
 now me like Wheat, yet
 he hath prayed for me,
 and my Faith shall not
 fail; and though the ve-
 ry reason why some per-
 sons do not believe, is
 for want of a clear under-
 standing of the Free Grace
 of God in the general

+ tenders of it to sinners ;
yet all that have that un-
derstanding do not be-
lieve , *John* 12. 17. there
were some whose hearts
were hardned that they
could not believe , and
Acts 13. 41. it was said
of the Jews, they should
in no waies believe the
Work of God, though a
man declare it to them ,
that is to say, though they
did understand it ; and as
Faith is wrought in the
soul by God , so it is
that by which we most
honour him , and with-
out which it is impossible
to

to please him. Faith works +
 many waies, and it is an
 excellent thing to be strong
 in faith, as we may see
 in those Worthies, *He-*
brews 11. It is the very
 life of Saints, *Galatians*
 2. 20. and without it there
 is no life in them, *John*
 6. 53. and as there is no life
 without it, so there is no
 life above it till grace be
 swallowed up in glory;
 For the just shall live by faith,
Hebrews the 10. verse
 38. but though faith acts
 many waies, and about
 many things, yet it must
 alwaies act in free grace,
 and

and there is no room for it
 elsewhere: for when we
 go to exercise faith out of
 Free Grace, it is weak,
 and feeble, and ready to be
 turned aside by the least
 repulse, but being there
 acted, all falls before it, as
C *Dagon* before the Ark, whe-
 ther sin, law, or devill;
 Sin falls before it, as its an
 Instrument or means by
 which God purifies the heart,
Acts 15.9. the law falls before
 it, as it takes the righteousness
 of Christ by which it is per-
 fectly fulfilled, *Rom.* 10. 4.
 Satan falls before it, as it is
 that by which we quench
 all his fiery darts, *Ephes.*

6. 16. And as in this way I did at first receive the pardon of sin, and so the knowledge of my interest in the Lord Jesus, for Justification, Redemption and Salvation; So I have no other way (as I believe there is no other) by which I still retain those glorious privileges, than in the same way in which I did first receive them, namely through grace by faith, not by any thing that is in me, or done by me, not by acts of obedience, works of righteousness, or submission to ordinances, all which are too low

low and too little to keep up my union with God ; but I desire to appear in these as they are commanded by God, and as they are fruits and effects of faith, and through which I have communion with God and his people, which is a very great privilege, and I desire that all Saints may so esteem of them, and by no means slight them ; but I do likewise desire that none may esteem of them above whats meet, as to glory in them, or to place that in them which is only peculiar to the Lord

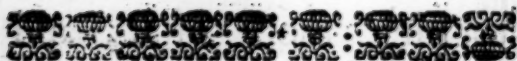
Jesus

Jesus himself, who is our
All in All, Colossi. 3. 11. Who
 of God is made unto us wis-
 dome, righteousness, sanctifica-
 tion, and redemption, that he
 that glorieth may glory in the
 Lord, 1 Cor. 1. 30, 31. And
 doubtless it is a great abuse
 to Christ, and Ordinances, to
 glory in them, which we
 are subiect to do, when we
 live not in the beholding
 of him through the riches of
 his grace by Faith, which as
 I said before, is the highest
 life, and so far as I have
 experienced the excellency
 and glory of it, I can say
 with the Apostle, *I desire to*
know

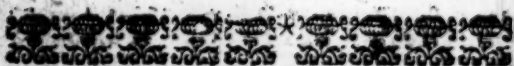
know nothing but Christ and
 him crucified, 1 Cor. 2. 2. and
 God forbid that I should glory
 in any thing save in the cross
 of our Lord Jesus Christ, Gal.
 1. 14. I may further say of my
 experience in this matter,
 as David of the Sword of
 Goliath, There is none like it,
 1 Sam. 21. 9. or as the
 Apostle said to the Corin-
 thians, That though they had
 ten thousand Instructors, yet
 not many Fathers; so though
 I had ten thousand expe-
 riments, yet I have none
 like this; For all must cen-
 ter here, and without
 this

this all is nothing ; And herein we think the glory and excellency of the life of faith in Free Grace doth much appear ; in that the weak and strong Christian do both meet and are satisfied in it , the highest capacity may be exercised in learning more of it , and yet the lowest may reach it , so as to live and have strong consolation in it , and Fools shall not erre therein , *Isaiah* the 35. chapter, verse 8. This is that new and living way by the blood of Jesus, *Hebrews* ch. 10. verses 19, 20. the

the richest and highest fa-
 vour that ever was bestowed
 on the children of men, to
 him therefore be glory and
 praise for evermore.



The



*The fourth Note of Experiences
how I was convinced and brought
to submit to Baptism and
Church-fellowship commanded
by Christ.*

BEing through mercy now
well satisfied in point of Ju-
stification, Redemption, and
Salvation, though I had nothing
to do to be saved, yet I had much
to do to glorifie God in relation
to Sanctification and Obedience;
but notwithstanding all my for-
mer experience in point of Faith,
I was very ignorant of Baptism,
and all other duties and Ordinan-
ces relating to the visible practice
of Believers, onely I had some
dark apprehensions of separation,
and a Church way, by reason of
H which

which I had thoughts to join with some who were called *Independents*; but considering how I had formerly been mistaken about things of that nature, I was not hasty to practise it, untill I was better satisfied, being somewhat at a loss about it; then after some time I heard of Baptism, though I had no acquaintance with any that practised it, yet knowing there were such, did occasion me to search the Scriptures about it, and by several places in the *Acts*, with that in *Mat.* 28. 19. I was in a great measure convinced that Baptism of Believers was an Ordinance of Christ, and that there could be no true Church without it, and that Baptizing of Infants is that for which I could find no ground in Scripture; and by degrees I was so fully satisfied in it, and I thought

(83)
thought the Scriptures were so plain and clear for it, that I did much wonder at my own ignorance, that I should be a professor so long, and so frequent in reading Scripture, and yet ignorant of that which was so plainly therein exprest; then coming to *London* to that end, namely to be instructed in the waies of God more perfectly, not knowing the like means else where, I went many times to hear in the Churches of Christ, by which, through the great blessing of God, I was more and more satisfied about it; yet notwithstanding all this, by hearkning to the delusions of my own heart, and Satans instruments, I met with many interruptions and temptations that kept me from my duty, at least one whole year after; some of those temptations were these:

H 2

First,

First, I thought though the Saints of old did practise these things, yet as they were now practised it was some kind of bondage, and below the privilege of the Gospell to be tyed to a particular people, especially in relation to hearing; for I thought I should not forbear hearing some particular men, (who were not in the order of the Gospell) that formerly I used to hear.

A second thing that hindered me was the failings and miscarriages of some particular persons then in the Churches.

A third hinderance was, I thought it my liberty to do or not do it.

A fourth hinderance was in relation to Persecution, I judged I should not be fit to suffer for it (though a truth of Christ) until

untill all those Scruples were removed.

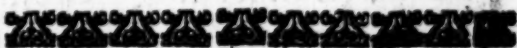
These, with others of the like nature, were the groundlesse thoughts that kept me from my duty; but though kept back by these for a time, yet I had such strong convictions that I could not leave it so, but was much endeavouring after satisfaction, and in the use of means God was pleased to satisfy me; but by reason of persecution there was no Church I knew of, but onely in *London*, and therefore I could not immediately do it; but being to be married soon after, I was to live in *London*, and then I resolved to submit to this Ordinance of Christ; but when I came to *London*, I heard all kind of preachers, one of which preached a strange kind of doctrine much notion-

al, which bred such a confusion in my heart that I knew not what to do, by which I was again hindered from my duty, being willing to try that doctrine, I not having heard the like before, it being full of enticing words of mans wisdom, which I did with as much diligence try for some time, examining the Scriptures about it, as ever I did any doctrine, but could find nothing in it but confusion, a meer sound of words, some of those bigge swelling words of vanity spoken of *Jude 16. 2 Pet. 2. 18.* so, through mercy, I left it, and escaped that snare, which I desire to remember to the praise of God. Then I resolved to prosecute my former purpose in relation to those duties before mentioned, yet still lingering in
Babylon

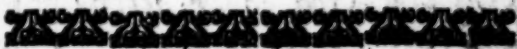
Babylon till the Lord was pleased by a stretched-out arm, and cleer voice, to bring to my remembrance those words in the 22. chapter of the Acts verse 6. *Arise and be baptized, why tarryest thou?* and (as I remember) for some daies together, whatever I was doing, those words were much in my thoughts, then I began to take particular notice of it, applying it to my own condition, whether I was able to give a reason why I tarried, the Lord having removed all my scruples, and answered all my objections, and speaking of it to my Husband, who was then much in the same condition, I remember we had some discourse about it, and the result was, that the next first day we

would go to the Church
 (where we had often heard)
 and declare what God had
 done for us in the great work
 of conversion, desiring also to
 obey him in all his commands,
 which accordingly we did, and
 gave them full satisfaction, and
 the week following were bap-
 tized and added to the Church,
 being sweetly satisfied and
 comforted therein; and as for
 my former scruples I was trou-
 bled no more with them, and
 in particular as to hearing out
 of the Church, I never de-
 sired it since, but God was
 pleased, and still is, to satis-
 fy me with the fatness of his
 house, feeding me with green
 pastures there; and sitting un-
 der the shadow of Christ, his
 Fruit is sweet to my tast;
 which

which the L O R D grant I
may be found so doing, as he
hath commanded, until his se-
cond comming.



Some



(100)

*Some brief Observati-
ons upon this fourth
Note of Experience.*

First, Concerning those
thoughts, that though
I had nothing to do to
be saved, yet I had much
to do to glorify God, &c.
from thence I observe.

*That as it is the duty of
all that have received the
Grace of God to be active for
his Glory, so it is the nature
of Grace to teach and engage
Saints to do the same.*

Secondly, Concerning
my

my ignorance of Baptism,
and other Ordinances, notwithstanding all my former Experience in point of Faith, from thence I observe,

That persons may have much Experience in point of privilege, and yet be ignorant of their duty.

As indeed we are more apt to learn the one than the other.

Thirdly, Concerning my ignorance of that which is so plainly expressed in Scripture, from thence I observe,

That light discovers darkness.

ness; and though Truth be never so plainly expressed, yet ignorance cannot apprehend it.

Fourthly, Concerning those interruptions and temptations that kept me from my duty, from thence I observe,

That naturally we are so averse to duty, that we are a long time before we know our duties, and when we know them we are subject to be kept from doing them by very trifles; and that it is Satans policy, if he cannot keep us from knowing our duties, to cast stumbling-blocks in our way if possible to keep us from doing them.

2. I observe, *That though Christs yoke be easie, yet we are hardly brought to put it on.*

Fifthly, Concerning the first hinderance, That I thought it some Bondage to be in a Church, from thence I observe,

That through ignorance of the nature of Christian Liberty, we are too subject to think that Bondage which is not only Liberty but a great Privilege.

Sixthly, Concerning the second hinderance, which was the unsuitable walkings of some particular persons then in the Church, from thence I observe.

That

That the Consideration of our
 Stumbling at the failings of o-
 thers, should make us carefull
 lest we occasion others to stum-
 ble at us.

Seventhly, Concerning
 the third hinderance, That
 it was our liberty whether
 we would walk in Chur-
 ches and submit to Ordi-
 nances or not, from thence
 I observe,

That we are naturally so
 addicted to liberty, that we
 are many times ready to cast
 off all obedience, and to look on
 the Ordinances of Christ as in-
 different things.

Eighthly, Concerning
 the

the fourth hinderance, Fear-
ing lest I had not faith e-
nough to suffer for it, from
thence I observe,

*That distrustfull thoughts of
future mercies many times keep
us from improving present mer-
cies.*

Ninethly , Concerning
those Convictions, that
though I was scrupled a-
bout truth, yet could not
leave it so, but endeavou-
red after full satisfaction,
from thence I observe,

*That strong Convictions are
not easily put out, and where
grace is predominant, there will
be an endeavour not to smother
but*

but to answer them.

Tenthly, Concerning that other hinderance by strange doctrine, from thence I observe,

That as faith comes by hearing; so there may be a hearing that tends to the prejudice of faith.

And such I conclude is all hearing out of the way of God, though some more, some lesse; I mean publick hearing out of the Church of God; and though some do iudge it their liberty and privilege so to do, I must needs confess I cannot so iudge: For though
possibly

possibly glorious things may be spoken, yet what privilege can it be for Saints to hear glorious things, where there is no promise of a blessing from God? and therefore I may say as the Apostle, of speaking in an unknown tongue, I had rather hear five words from a true Ministry, or in a Church of Christ, where he hath promised his blessing and presence, than five thousand elsewhere, though I desire in a personal way to own and embrace all or any appearance of God where ever I find it, and can
I upon

upon that account truly say,
 I do much respect, love,
 and delight in some who
 are not yet come up to the
 true worship of Christ in
 his Church, but I must
 be true to my principles,
 I cannot see how we that
 are, according to the Gos-
 pel, ioyned to the Lord,
 and his Church, by which
 we hold out to the world
 a visible profession of his
 name, and a separation
 from all false waies of wor-
 ship, which in our prin-
 ciples we judge them who
 are not rightly constituted
 with us according to the
 appoint-

appointment and practice
 of Christ and his Apostles
 to be no other, I say I
 cannot see how we can
 meet with them in their
 publique worship, to hear
 their Ministers, or in any
 other spiritual duty, but
 it is a crossing our own
 principles: As thus, they
 own themselves true Churches,
 and Ministers of
 Christ, the ignorant world
 knoweth not but they are
 so, we by our presence
 being silent do say the same,
 though in our Judgement
 we cannot so own them,
 which is a plain contradi-

ction in our principles ;
 we say they are not Churches and Ministers of Christ,
 by our practice we say they
 are, as hath been minded.

Secondly, As it is a contradiction of our own principles to it hath had such effects, which are too visible, and remains unto this day. I must confess, in my most serious thoughts I have wondered what should be the reason that any in the house of God should desire to be elsewhere : I am sure there is no reason to be given for it, neither from Scripture, nor experience; therefore I conclude,

its either from ignorance, & so persons in their practice cross their own principles and not know it; or else its from corrupt principles; or else they are overcome by some violent temptations. As to the 1. of these, I trust there are not many in the house of God so ignorant. As to the 2. it is the desire of my soul, that God would reprove & shew them the evill of such principles, and recover them out of such snares. As to the 3. Let them take heed lest having put their hand to the plow, and looking back, they become unfit for the Kingdom

dom of God, *Luke 9. 62.*
 and let them likewise take
 heed of pleasing men, or
 halting between two opi-
 nions, but if God be God
follow him, if Baal follow him,
1 Kings 28 21. This may
 seem harsh language to some,
 but I am satisfied that what
 I have written hath not been
 from a censorious spirit, to
 Judge of the ~~se~~al State of
 any, or to question the
 grace of God in any, where
 it doth appear in the least
 measure, and therefore let
 none say that because I can-
 not own any to be true
 Churches or Ministers of
 Christ,

Christ, but such as are in the same order with us, that therefore I say there is nothing of God or Truth in them, or that none shall be saved but our selves, or that we love none but those of our own Judgement, which if any do so think, or speak of us, it is a very great mistake; for if I may speak for others, as I have already said, I do upon a godly account love, and delight in some who are not in our Churches, and do wait for the accomplishment of those glorious promises when they and we shall

have a pure language, & shall call upon the Lord, & serve him with one consent, and when we shall have one heart and one way, *and there shall be one Lord, and his name one, Zeph. 3.9. Jer. 32. 39. Zach. 14.9.* In the mean time, Let none under a pretence of waiting for the accomplishment of such promises as these, grow cold, and indifferent in the great things of God: For none can truly wait for the accomplishment of Promises, but such as do wait in a close walking with God, according to that measure of light received, and so

so those that have but a
 little of the knowledge of
 God, let them follow on
 to know the Lord, *Hosea*
 6. 3. and let those that are
 in the faith, earnestly con-
 tend for it, *Jude* 3. and
 such as are in Gospel Chur-
 ches, let them stand fast in
 one Spirit, with one mind,
 striving together for the
 faith of the Gospel, *Phil.*
 1. 27. and let every one that
 names the name of Christ,
 depart from iniquity, *2*
Timothy 2. 19. and those that
 love the Lord, hate evil,
Psalms 97. 10. And as I de-
 sire that none may flight,
 grow

+ grow cold, or indifferent
 in the great things of God,
 under a pretence of waiting
 for high enjoyments or dis-
 coveries, which shall be in
 the later daies; so I desire
 likewise that none may
 plead against the Truth,
 under a pretence of Love,
 as many do in these daies,
 labouring to confound light
 with darkness, truth with
 error, and to make an a-
 greement, where God hath
 made none. Let such know,
 that true spiritual love, as it
 is wrought in the heart by
 the Spirit of God, so it is
 bounded within the limits
 of

of Truth, Love and Truth
 go hand in hand; it is so
 fixed upon God, that it
 Loves all in and for him;
 spiritual Love must have a
 spiritual object, and as the
 object is more or less visi-
 ble, so is that Love, it can-
 not love every thing alike,
 nay it works as well by ha-
 tred of evill as approving
 that which is good, *Psa. 101.*
Psa. 97. 10. Rev. 2. 6. Psa. 119.
122, 128. It loves that which
 God loves, and hates that
 which he hates; it loves the
 Word of God, the Ordinan-
 ces of God, and the people
 of God, and hates all that

is in opposition to these, it rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, 1 *Cor.* 13. 6. This is true spiritual love, in which we are to receive every truth, and by which faith worketh, 2 *Thes.* 2. 10. *Gal.* 5. 6. and I dare affirm, whatever persons may pretend of spiritual love that is not of this nature, it is a meer delusion, and that all that fear the Lord ought to take heed of it.

*The fift Note of Experience,
concerning Notions, and Pre-
tended Spiritualities, in which
Satan transforms himself into
an Angel of light; and how far
I was deceived by it, and how
the Lord was pleased to recover
me out of it.*

BEing now through much
mercy brought out of *Babylon*
into *Sion*, to partake of those
dainties which the Lord hath
prepared for his people, there
Satan, that grand Enemy of man-
kind, who goeth about like a roar-
ing Lion seeking whom he may de-
vour, 1 Pet. 5. 8. envies my hap-
piness, and waites his opportu-
nity to catch me as a fish in
the

the water, covering his hook
 with a bait of mystery and spi-
 rituality, who though I had e-
 scaped him in all his former ap-
 pearances as a devill, yet now
 transforms himself into an An-
 gel of light, if it were possible
 for ever thereby to beguile and
 deceive me; knowing that
 those that are so deceived are
 the fittest Agents to promote his
 Kingdome, and that many times
 he prevails this way when he
 can prevail no other way, draw-
 ing persons to that by degrees
 through corrupt principles,
 which they would have trem-
 bled at the thoughts of before
 they had such principles; but
 God was pleased not onely to
 keep me from such things, but
 also discover to me the way by
 which persons are brought to
 such things, that so to the praise
 of

of his Grace, I might avoid those waies, and also forewarn others to avoid them likewise. But before I was brought to discover Satan under these veiles, by hearkning to the voice of the Tempter (in the thoughts of which I desire ever to be humbled in the presence of God) I was deceived and beguiled by him in some particular things, and that after this manner; after we had lived some time in *London*, walking with the Church, in the practice of the Gospel, it pleased God to remove our habitation into the Country, where we had not that privilege, and after a while, (my Husband being in the Army) it occasioned our often moving into several places, where we found not only particular persons, but whole Churches very

very much corrupted, owning & practising strange things, though under plausible terms and spiritual pretences, by which a while after they were broken and scattered, leaving the profession of truth in the practice of the Ordinances of Christ, some under one notion, and some under another, so that it was hard to find in those parts one particular person that had sound principles, much less a whole Church where there was a powerful Ministry, and a wise government, by reason of which I began by degrees to be somewhat confused in Judgement; and truly, when I consider those things, and what temptations I was exposed to at that time, I do not wonder I was so confused, but I rather wonder at the mercy of God that I was not swallowed

swallowed up with confusion, as many were in those daies, for though I was weak in principles, and by those things somewhat confused, yet I do not know that in two or three years time I had received any corrupt principles; but afterward being with a people where Satan had transformed himself into an Angell of light, I think I may say in the highest degree, under terms of Mystery, Spirit, waiting upon God, and such like, by them I was beguiled and deceived in some particular things, though never in the height of that which was practised by them; the particulars about which I was deceived were chiefly these three or four.

First: Concerning godliness, being a mystery, that it did consist of something within, and not of something without, and
K
that

and that the Saints were to expect life and Salvation from a Christ within, and not from a Christ without.

Secondly, that Saints were not to do duties by or from a command without, but from a command within, and that the word Command in Scripture was not a command to them till they had a word within them.

Thirdly, that as to the time of doing duties they were to wait for the movings of the Spirit to carry them forth to it, and this they called waiting for a power, and till they had such a power, they were to do nothing but sit still and wait, and this not only in private duties, but in the Church also, not owning any Ministry by way of gifts or office, but to come together, and there sit and wait till they had

had a power, and then to speak, whether men or women.

In these particulars, which carried such a face or shew of spirituality, I was corrupted, but did never fully own them in Judgement, nor practice; and for such principles as (I thought) did lead to looseness, either in matter of conversion, or in slighting the *Churches* or ordinances of Christ, I did alwaies oppose them, though I believe such principles do naturally follow the others, but I did not then discern it, they being covered over with such Angel-like appearances; And as to that principle of waiting, though I did own it in Judgement more fully than any of these other, yet I could never come up to it in my practice in private duties, but by reason of some convictions still remaining

in me I could not stay so long
 from duty till I had such a pow-
 er, but did frequently go to du-
 ty when I had it not, though
 sometimes I thought I had it.
 But in the presence of others I did
 not appear in duty, but when I
 thought I had that power, though
 I never did so appear but in one
 place for a short season. In doing
 which I thought I had commu-
 nion with God; but I do believe
 it was no such thing, but a meer
 Spirit of delusion: First because
 I know no Scripture-ground for
 such a practice; and secondly
 from the consideration of the sad
 fruit I had by it, for after a little
 time I began to lose my peace,
 and was very much troubled,
 having little or no communion
 with God, nor scarce any thing
 to speak to or for God, and so
 confounded I was in my own
 spi-

spirit, that I knew not what to do, and speaking of it to some, and those not a few, they labored to perswade me it was a dispensation of God, and that the Saints after they were brought out of *Egypt*, must be in the wilderness before they come to *Canaan*, and that the end of God in bringing them there was, that he might speak comfortably to them, and therefore I was not to be troubled; but to be quiet, sit still, and wait, and not to stir the Lord till he pleased; this did not at all satisfy me, but I continued in a very sad condition; and one thing more by the way I cannot forget, and that is, that while I was in this condition, I never was so troubled with temptations as I was at that time; One temptation which I

was troubled with many years before, I was kept from until at this time, which now was more violent than at first, as indeed those things naturally lead to such temptations, which temptation is the same expressed in the beginning of the book page 25.

This was the sad fruit of my straying from the pure waies of truth, which as I desire ever to own with shame to my self, so likewise considering the temptations I was exposed to, and the little means I had to forewarn and keep me from such things, I desire for ever to bless the Lord that I strayed no further; that though in *these* things I had much forgotten him, yet he was pleased to remember me, and shewed me the evil and danger of these notions, and restored *me* those former joies that once

had in him, and made that which was intended by Satan to overthrow me, to be of great advantage to me, which he was pleased to do after this manner.

Having some occasion to undertake a passage on the Sea from *London to Newcastle*, in which condition it pleased the Lord to reprove me by the raging waves of the Sea, and tempestuous storms, then began my trouble to increase, but not so much from that which was without, as from something within, the waves of the Sea not beating so fast on the Ship, as the waves of temptations did arise in my heart, being in a very much-troubled dissatisfied condition, not finding my heart willing to submit to God, neither indeed knowing how to behave my self towards him in relation to the present

trouble, all which was occasioned by those corrupt principles, being at a great loss whether I should now pray or wait for a power, not being sensible of any other power at that time but what was from the present trouble, to put me upon it; but in this trial I was glad to betake myself to my former principles, the Lord bringing to my remembrance that command and promise, *Psa. 50. 15.* by which I was encouraged to cry to God, as indeed I could not, nor durst not forbear; for still owning my interest in God, by which I was made capable of prayer, I could not answer that, with such other like Scriptures, as *1 Thes. 5. 17. &c.* but yet notwithstanding I was dissatisfied about it, that notion of waiting carrying such a shew of spirituality, I could not easily

easily let it go, but yet this try-
 all had so shaken it, that I did
 begin much to question it, and
 also those other notions of the
 like nature; then it pleased the
 Lord to bring us safe to Land,
 through which mercy I had some
 little communion with God, be-
 ing able to speak of his good-
 ness in delivering us from that
 danger, but through that dissa-
 tisfaction, which still remained
 in me about these notions, it was
 interrupted again, and my be-
 loved had withdrawn himself,
 and I was very much troubled,
 not knowing where to rest, nor
 what to do, but notwithstanding
 I did begin much to question
 those things from that trial I
 had of them on the Sea, yet I
 was more inclined to them than
 to truth, for some time, espe-
 cially to that of prayer, and
 three

three or four times after I remember in discourse with some friends I did a little plead for them, which though it was my sin so to do, I did not then know it, but must needs say I did as simply and sincerely aim at doing the wil of *God* in all those things, as ever I did in any thing, and therefore though Satan had so beguiled me, yet I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly ; but my trouble and want of communion with God did still increate, insomuch that I was scarce able to bear my burthen, and speaking of it to my Husband, who was at that time much in the same condition, I remember, amongst many words he spake, some were to this purpose, That seeing we were in such a condition, and at such a loss, it was best to speak
 said
 but

but little, that as we did but little good, we might do but little harm, which I did well approve of, and after that I spake little for or against any thing till I was better satisfied; then being so truly in a day of adversity, according to that counsel of the Wise man in *Eccles.* 7. 14. I sat down seriously to consider what might be the cause of my being in so sad and strange a condition; Through which consideration by degrees I came to see and conclude that certainly there was something amiss in my Judgement as to those notions, beginning clearly to discern they did so oppose and contradict my former received principles, that they could not stand together, but if one was true, the other was false, and that I must leave the one or the other; for
 though

though I had received the new, I could never fully quit the old, neither in Judgement nor practice. Then I was restless in my desire for three or four daies, to know which of the two were truth, oft times earnestly begging of God that he would decide the controversie, and discover to me which was according to his mind, and which not, being fully satisfied that but one of them could be truth; then it pleased the Lord to put me upon a particular examination what grounds I had in Scripture, and what experience I had of both, & in reading and examining my Scripture-grounds, I began to discern a great inclination in my heart to the former principles, finding (I thought) the Scripture very full and plain for them, but nothing for the other, but what

was

was from some dark mysterious
 interpretations, which were ver-
 ry doubtfull; and for my own
 experience, I did remember, and
 was constrained to acknowledge,
 that in receiving and keeping
 close to the former, I had joy
 and peace, and much satisfacti-
 on, and communion with God,
 but since I received the other,
 the Lord had as it were hid his
 face from me, and I was filled
 with confusion and distraction,
 and the remembrance of that
 tryall I had of them upon the
 Sea did very much help me now
 to see the falsity of them, that in
 a time of tryal I durst not stick
 to them; as indeed I plainly saw
 that I could never stick to them
 so as to answer them fully in my
 practice, unless I should have
 laid aside the appearance of god-
 liness, & have been very profane:

the

the consideration of which, with some other evill consequences, which I saw clearly did naturally attend those things, was another means by which the Lord was pleased to recover me from them, and to discover Satan under his veil to me, how by these things he did intend, if the Lord had not prevented him, to have stript me of all my hopes; and in particular as to that of being saved by a Christ within, and not by a Christ without, the Lord was pleased to shew me that it was quite another thing differing from the Gospel, and that it was attended with this evill consequence, even to overthrow the whole Gospel, and to deny the Lord that bought them; at the thoughts of which my soul did tremble, and that if he should have prevailed here, all my hopes

were:

were gone; for I could not, nor durst not rest on any thing in my self as a ground of hope for life and salvation; but on the other hand concerning my hope in the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Gospel, I could truly say of that as Peter did, John 6. 68. *Lord whither shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life,* so whither should I go from the Gospel? there are the words of eternal life, there is all my rest and hopes in the Lord Jesus, through the Gospel, and therefore I resolved in the strength of Christ to stick to this, and leave the other. Then secondly as to that of waiting for a power to pray, and that there was no command but from within, concerning both these the Lord was pleased to shew me that it was not according to his mind, but a meer inven-

invention of Satan, by degrees to draw me from my duties, and that it was attended with this evil consequence, even to slight the Scriptures and commands of God, and to expose the Soul to Satans deceivings, to walk by the imaginations of their own hearts, instead of the motions of the spirit, and also it brings the soul into great uncertainties, which the truth never doth; but on the other hand to do duties in obedience to the authority and commands of God in Scripture, and to pray at all times as we have opportunities, having received a principle of grace by which we are made capable of prayer, I saw this was a clear and sound truth, not being attended with any evil consequence, nor bringing the soul into straits and uncertainties, but rather gives enlargements,

largements in every condition ;
 and therefore I desired likewise
 to keep close to these, and leave
 the other ; but oh the joy and
 comfort that was in my Soul at
 this return ! I cannot express it,
 but this I say, it was to me as
 life from the dead. And as I was
 blessing, praising, and magnifi-
 ing the Lord for his unchangea-
 ble goodness to me, my Husband,
 having been some time from me,
 came home, to whom I did de-
 clare my condition, and what
 the Lord had done for me, who,
 as I have formerly hinted, was
 much in the same condition with
 me, who also declared that he
 had in a measure received the
 like mercy, which did much in-
 crease my joy. Then I remember
 he desir'd we might seek the Lord
 by prayer, and praise his holy
 name for these and all his mer-
 L cies ;

cies; in which duty the Lord was pleased so abundantly to manifest himself to us, thereby testifying his acceptance of us, that for a while we sat in admiration, neither of us scarce being able to speak for tears; and truly it was such a mercy that I trust we shall for ever admire it, at least in these five particulars.

First, that God should deal so faithfully with us in relation to his promise, that when we were ready to turn to the right hand or to the left, he caused us to hear his voice behind us, saying, *this is the way, walk in it, Esay 30. 21.*

Secondly, that when we were straying from truth, that the Lord should keep us that we strayed no further, that we did not run to the height of those notions, denying the Churches, and

and Ordinances of Christ, and blaspheming the truth, as very many did in those times, even denying the Lord that bought them.

Thirdly, that the Lord should deal so fatherly and tenderly in his restoring of us, that it was not by any extraordinary affliction or chastisement, neither were we at any time a trouble to the Churches, or grief to any Saint I know of.

Fourthly, that the Lord should be pleased to bring us off so clearly from those things; for many are brought off from them, and yet there is still so much confusion remaining upon their spirits, that it is hard to discern whether they are brought off or no.

Fifthly, that the Lord should vouchsafe this mercy to both of

us, & that at one & the same time;
 and that at our return he should
 manifest such a sweet acceptance
 of us, melting our hearts into
 tears of joy, to our mutual com-
 fort in the Lord, and in each o-
 ther; and so that stream of our
 hearts being now turned from
 running after lying vanities, the
 Lord was pleased to re-establish
 and confirm us every day more
 and more in the truth, turning
 this sad (yet blessed) Experience,
 to his praise, and our great ad-
 vantage, the remembrance of
 which I trust shall be a mercy that
 shall stand us in stead at times of
 need, whiles we live; which the
 Lord grant it may be so, to the ho-
 nour and praise of his great name
 and our own peace and happines
 in himself. *Amen.*

Some further Considerations relating to this part of my Experience, it being that which I judge so considerable I cannot omit the reviewing of it.

AND the Lord grant I may review it daily, so as to have my heart raised to an holy admiration of the goodness and faithfulness of God towards me in it, and that it may allwaies lie as a strong engagement upon my heart to love and obey him in all things.

which in consideration of
 his unspeakable mercy is but
 my reasonable service, *Rom.*
 12. 1. And as I desire for
 ever to bless the Lord that
 he was pleased to deliver
 me from these deceits, so it
 shall be my prayer that all
 the Lords people may be
 delivered from them, and
 that the rather, because I am
 perswaded that errors of that
 nature are the worst of all
 others, and doubtless they
 are the greatest mystery of
 iniquity that ever Satan had
 on foot in the world. But
 because I am not willing to
 pass my sentence without
 grounds

grounds, and because every thing that is reprov'd is made manifest by the light, and that which doth make manifest is light, *Ephes. 5.*

13. I desire, according to that light of truth which God hath given to me, farther to consider, not only in general that those kind of errors are the worst of all others, but more particularly how they are so.

First, I conceive they are the worst of all others, in that they do naturally tend and lead to the highest degree of evil, and that both as they take with gra-

cious hearts, and as they take with carnal hearts; First, as they take with gracious hearts they do naturally interrupt the souls communion with God, and exposeth it to great temptations, bringing it to straits and extremities, and into the greatest confusion that can be possible, so far as they prevail; and for the truth of this, besides my own experience, I appeal to any experienced Christian if it be not so.

Secondly, as they take with carnal hearts they lead by degrees to the greatest evil

vil both in a spiritual and
 vil sense ; for such hear
 not being seasoned with
 grace, they run from one
 notion to another, till they
 run so high as to stand di-
 rectly in opposition to Christ
 and his Gospel: For when
 they come to be confound-
 ed and at a loss in their
 Judgements, and meet with
 such Temptations , which
 those errors naturally lead
 to , they are overcome by
 them , and under a pretence
 of living above Ordinances
 they deny the Ordinances
 of Christ , and by degrees
 the whole Word of God ,
 cal-

calling it literal and carnal,
 and under a pretence of spi-
 rituality, blaspheme the name
 of Christ, calling him *A
 fleshy Christ*, and so denying
 the Lord that bought them, 2
 Pet. 2. 1. and going against
 such strong convictions and
 cleer manifestations of light
 and knowledge, as some
 have done, doubtless they
 have fallen into that unpar-
 donable sin expressed in Heb.
 10. and so come at last to
 jeer and scoff at all appear-
 ance of godliness; and it
 makes way for the highest
 degree of wickedness also
 in a civil sense, having giv-

en themselves up to work all un-
 cleanness with greediness, Esay
 4. 19. and so breaking all
 bonds, though they had escar-
 ped the pollutions of the world
 through the knowledge of our
 Lord, yet being again entangled
 therein, their latter end is worse
 than the beginning, 2 Pet. 2.
 20. according to that Mat.
 13. 43, 44, 45. When the un-
 clean spirit is gone out of a man,
 he walketh through dry places,
 seeking rest, and findeth none,
 then he returns, and taketh se-
 ven other spirits more wicked
 than himself, and they enter in
 and dwell there, and the last
 state of that man is worse than
 the

the beginning; he is now far
 more wicked than ever: this
 is the nature, and these are
 the effects of those kind of
 notions as they take with
 carnal hearts; and that it
 is so, I appeal to the times
 in which we live, if we
 have not seen it so with
 many who had escaped the
 pollutions of the world, and
 that evil spirit seemed to be
 gone out of them, and they
 have made large professions
 of the power of truth in
 their hearts, but they are
 turned with the dog to his
 vomit, and with the sow
 that was washt to her wal-
 lowing

lowing in the myre, glorying in their shame, and doing that without any reluctance, which they would have trembl'd at the thoughts of before they had those notions, and if any should have prophesied such things of them, they would have said as *Hazael* did to *Elisba*, *Is thy servant a dog that he should do such things?* 2 Kings 8. 13. These things considered, is a sufficient ground for me to conclude, that errors of that nature are the worst of all others.

But secondly, as they are the worst in that they naturally

ally lead to the highest degree of evil, so they are the worst in that they are the greatest mystery of iniquity, so more deceiving than others; that they are so, it will appear, if we consider, first, how covertly, and under how many veils Satan comes in them, beguiling and deceiving with the most plausible, spiritual, Angel-like glorious appearances that can be expressed, and as it said of the false Prophets, *Mat. 7. 15. They come in sheeps clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves;* so it may be truly said of those notions; they

they are clothed with glorious
 and Christ-like appearances,
 but when we see to the bottom
 of them, they differ as much
 from Christ, as a ravening
 wolf from a sheep: for they
 do not only beguile and de-
 ceive in that they are not
 what they seem or pretend
 to be, and in that they do not
 give what they promise;
 viz. high lights, glory, per-
 fection, immediate commu-
 nion with the father, & such
 like; But as a ravening wolf,
 so far as they prevail, they
 devour and destroy by de-
 grees all appearance of good,
 and therefore the Apostle
 calls

calls them perverse things, *Acts* 20. 30. and 2 *Pet.* 2. 1. they are called *damnable heresies*, and *pernitious waies*, and *big swelling words of vanity*, ver. 18. words that will eat as doth a *Cancker*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 17. And because they are so apparently a mystery of iniquity, that is (I conceive) the reason why the Apostle gives so many exhortations, and doth so often forewarn the Saints to take heed of them: for questionless they are the very same errors which are mentioned in those Scriptures, and we may know them to be so, in that they carry the very same
badges

badges and marks expressed in those Scriptures, as

First, in relation to the rise of them, which was not from the false Prophets of the world, but from false Brethren in the Church, and others such like, who professed an opposition to those false Prophets; and the place and people among whom they were most prevailing, was not with ignorant persons in the world, but among knowing persons, and in the Churches of Christ; all which is the very same exprest in the fore-mentioned Scriptures, as

And 29. with the rest.

A Second mark by which we may know them to be the same, is in relation to the nature and effects of them, as is already expressed, namely, that persons have been led by them to the highest degree of wickedness, waxen worse and worse till they have been as vile as hell it self, and particularly denying the resurrection of the body, and the Lord Jesus Christ, with the like.

2. they will appear to be the greatest mystery of iniquity, in that Satan makes use of them to do his greatest

est works, which is to overcome the Saints, and to encounter with such as have the greatest strength to resist him, and such as have escaped him in all his other appearances, he now makes use of them as things that are most strong to deceive by, as we may remember how exceedingly he did prevail with them about five or six years since in this nation, when it was hard to find one person, much less a whole Church, that was not corrupted with them; at which time was the height of their reign in general, though in

some places many particular
 persons are enslaved by them
 unto this day; some under
 one name, some under ano-
 ther; at which time before-
 mentioned my self did expe-
 rience those expressed in p.
 113, 114. which I am per-
 swaded I should not have
 done, had they not been so
 general, and of such a bewit-
 ching deceiving nature; for
 I can truly say, so far as I did
 experience them, I was
 meerly deceived and begui-
 led from an apprehended
 worth and excellency in
 them; and as it was with me,
 so I believe it was with many
 others,

others, whom the Lord hath recovered from them. But

Thirdly, they will appear to be of a strange deceiving nature, and so the greatest mystery of iniquity, if we consider, that many of the most eminent Saints in those daies were most incident to be deceived by them, I mean the most eminent as to personal grace and qualifications, and as to a strict conversation, though I cannot say as to a sound Judgement, in knowledge and understanding of the principles of truth; for questionless there was something of that nature

wanting; for had they been
 as well principled in truth,
 as they were really united to
 truth, they would have dis-
 cerned Satan at a distance,
 and not been so deceived by
 him; and that I conceive
 was the very reason why so
 many were deceived in those
 daies: for having been a long
 time in darkness and igno-
 rance, being but newly
 brought from under the Bio-
 shops and Presbyterian
 yokes, they were generally
 weak in Judgement, though
 (it may be) strong in affecti-
 on, and so the more easily
 deceived; like children ready

dy to catch up anything that hath a glorious appearance, not weighing and considering whether it be really so.

Another reason I conceive why such precious ones were so subject to be deceived in those daies, was from an extreme in minding truth as it relates to the inward man in point of experience, and inward workings; which is in it self very good; but being in an extreme on that hand, Satan took advantage by it, and presented things in a plausible seeming spiritual appearance, beguiled and deceived them before they

were aware. We are subject to extremes on all hands; some do mind truth so much in an outward way as it relates to Order and Ordinances, as Baptism, Church-fellowship and the like, that they mind little else as to the end of these; and some are in the extreme on the other hand, and so while they were eagerly pursuing after the mystery of truth as to their intentions, they were beguiled with the mystery of iniquity: much like that of the Jews concerning the Law *Rom. 9. 3.* They sought after righteousness, but did not attain it,

it, Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith: So these sought after truth really as to their intentions, but did not attain it; wherefore? because they sought it not in the way of God; They sought it not in his way as it relates to the Ordinances and commands of Christ, in way of obedience and privilege together, but only as it relates to the inward man by way of privilege; and as the Jewes were strict in legal righteousness, so these did not run into waies of sin; neither (I believe) can many of them charge themselves with any sin

for as that which occasioned
 is at first, but only weakness
 in Judgement, not being
 well principled, and so not
 having an equal esteem of all
 truth.

Another reason why ma-
 ny Saints were so deceived
 in those daies, as I apprehend,
 was, That they being but
 newly come to the faith were
 expos'd to great temptations,
 having but little means of
 strength against them, it may
 be far from a Church, or else
 in a Church where were false
 Teachers; as in those dayes
 there were very many, by rea-
 son of which many were de-
 ceived;

ceived; whereas others, who
 were as weak, if not weaker,
 being in Churches where
 there were sound Teachers,
 were kept from them: which
 may be a caution, as to parti-
 cular persons, to take heed
 what and whom they hear;
 so to Churches, who they
 permit to be Teachers, and
 not to suffer any unsound
 doctrine to be taught. It may
 also be a word of remem-
 brance to all that do enjoy
 this great mercy to have
 sound and faithful Teachers,
 highly to esteem them for their
 works sake, and to account such
 worthy of double honour, giving
 them

them all due respect and encouragement, that they may do their work with joy, and not with grief, according to *Hebrews* 13. 17. *1 Thessal.*

5. 12, 13. *1 Timothy* 5. 17.

Other reasons may be given for the Saints' mistake in those things, but I shall mention no more, intending only my own experience. For I can truly say, that upon a diligent search and enquiry what might be the cause of my own mistakes, I find them to be no other but these very things exprest. As

First I was weak in principles,

ciples, as indeed I had never been under much means to be otherwise.

Secondly, I am conscious to my self of some extreme in minding truth as it relates to the inward man, though truly I know not that I did slight any Ordinance or command of Christ, but that I did rather highly esteem of them; but not to lessen sin, it is possible there may be something of that nature, though I know it not.

Thirdly, I am sure I was exposed to great temptations of this kind, having little means of strength against them.

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them, finding so many corrupted, though through mercy it is better now, that breach being made up with great advantage, for which I desire with all Saints to praise the Lord for ever; for doubtless the Saints advantage in their enlarged experience and confirmation in the truth is so great by these things that I cannot express it. Again, it calls for praise, that as the Lord hath turned it to our great advantage, so he hath wonderfully disappointed the expectations of the devil, and wicked men, who were ready to say as in

Psa.

Psalm 135. 25. Ah so would
 we have it, verily concluding,
 that though they could not
 suppress us by their persecut-
 ing power, yet now we
 would destroy our selves, as
 indeed we might have so
 done, had not the Lord pre-
 vented; and we may say it
 was the Lords doing, and it
 is marvellous in our eyes.

And whereas some by rea-
 son of those things have been
 ready to question our pra-
 ctice, whether it be of God;
 Let them know, that there is
 no ground from thence to
 question it, seeing it is no
 more than what hath been

in those Churches in the A-
 postles daies, and what they
 did foretell should be in
 these daies, 1 *Corinth.* 15.
 12. 1 *Timothy* 1. 19. 2
Timothy 2. 18. 2 *Peter* 2. 12.
Acts 20.30. But if it were a
 safe ground to judge of truth
 by what hath appeared
 in relation to those things,
 then there is more ground
 of confirmation that what
 we practise is of God, seeing
 that notwithstanding those
 things we have been so won-
 derfully preserved as we are
 unto this day; but though
 these things may be some-
 thing as to the ignorant, yet
 the

yet the rule by which we judge of our practice, is only as it hath its ground and rise in holy Scripture, being built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner Stone : Therefore it hath never been any scruple at all to me ; for though some have denyed the Churches, and turned their ears from hearing the truth, and have turned to fables, yet the Churches and truth is the same, as God is the same.

Now as for the grounds or reasons why some of the

Saints themselves have so done, I shall say nothing, because, as I said before, I intend no more but my own experience, and through the mercy of God I was never so far corrupted as to question either the Scriptures, Churches, or Ordinances of Christ, much less to withdraw from them, or to give any just occasion to be withdrawn from by them; yet notwithstanding I do not in the least question the reality of those poor souls who have been so far overcome, and are through mercy again returned: and as
for

for such as never return, I shall leave them to be judged by the Lord, who only is the judge of those that are without, 1 Cor. 5. 13. Having thus far considered of these allegorical notions, how they are the worst of all errors, and the greatest mystery of iniquity, in that they are more deceiving than others, promising the greatest good, but leading directly to the greatest evil, and having given some reasons, as I judge, why the Saints in these daies have been so generally deceived by them; I shall further

proceed to consider what may be the end of God in permitting it so to be.

First, I conceive it may be in general, that such as were approved may be made manifest, agreeable to 1 Cor. 11. 9. which accordingly hath been; many by those things were made manifest to be approved, though others that were not, have appeared to be what they are. But

Secondly, and more particularly, I believe the Lord had many good ends in it, both in relation to himself, in relation to them, and in relation

relation to others of his people, it may be some that are yet unborn.

First, In relation to himself, for the exaltation of his praise, that when they should come to see how great their deliverance was, and what an addition to all their former mercies, they might admire his goodness, and break forth into the high praises of his name, and that all the daies of their lives, when this mercy comes into their thoughts. For my own particular I can truly say, that the mercy of God to me in relation

tion to those things, I look upon it as the greatest mercy that ever I received from the Lord, next the manifestation of his Love in Jesus Christ through the Gospel. But

Secondly, In relation to them so deceived, that they should have enlarged experience of the fulness of God, and of their own nothingness, and of the sweetness and excellency of truth above error, how it doth excell it as far as light excels darkness, and live more upon God, and less upon themselves, in faith and humi-

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humility, and in the increase of all grace, in more cleerness of understanding and knowledge of the Truth, for doubtless through the goodness of the Lord, who hath promised to do his people good by every thing, they do gain by it in all these in some measure; for my own particular, I must needs say, though I am still but weak, yet through mercy my gain by those things is so great, that I would not be without it, though I desire not to purchase any more at that rate.

Thirdly, In relation to

others, that through their
experience, they might be
the more able to forewarn
others, who may meet with
the like temptations ; for
certainly had the Saints in
those daies had that ex-
perience of Satans work-
ings in that nature, which
now they have, and had
the Mouth of truth been so
open against it as it is at
this day, it would doubtless
have prevented much; and
therefore by the way I must
needs say, I am perswaded
it will be a great aggrava-
tion of sin, for any to be
taken or held by those
things

things when there is so much means to avoid them, as through the mercy of God there is in these daies almost in every place. Now the Lord having these and other such like ends in permitting those things, I desire that my self with others; who have experienced them in any measure, may be carefull to answer those ends; for doubtless if our deliverance be of God, and that we are cleerly brought off from those confusions, we shall answer all those ends of God in some measure.

○ In the next place, as to the way and means by which the Lord hath been pleased to recover his people from these things, I shall say little, because I believe it hath been various, some by one means, some by another, as they were in various Conditions; for my own particular I have declared at large how it was with me, only these General heads I shall again remind.

First, I was brought into great Straits and much confusion in Judgement.

Secondly, the Lord was pleased to withdraw his presence

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sence from me.

Thirdly, Being sensible of that confusion, and want of communion with God, I was put upon enquiry into my own heart, what might be the reasons of it.

Fourthly, It pleased the Lord to make me willing to be informed, and to examine things by the Scriptures.

Fifthly, he was pleased to draw forth my heart with much earnestness to seek to him by prayer, which through great mercy was largely answered.

And

And thus I doubt not, but by what I have written it will appear that I have not, without good grounds both from Scripture and experience, Judged those things to be the greatest mystery of iniquity, and the most dangerous, and worst of all errors.

○ And here I cannot but mind something further, as to the continuation of those things, which is, as they are the worst of all others, so their time is short; for according to my most serious observation, wherever they come,
and

and where they continue longest, their rise, reign, and ruin, is all accomplished in a few years; for in a short time generally persons have been so confounded that they have either come to see themselves deluded, and so have turned from them, or else they have run to absolute Atheism, and so ended there.

I shall now only answer one objection, as to my own experience, and so end this discourse.

Some have said that I cannot judge of these things
by

by experience, because, according to what I have declared I never had but little experience of them, but only in three or four things, and those I could never fully come up to neither, in Judgement, nor practise, neither could I leave these outward things, which all must leave before they can see the glory of the inward. And those that have not put themselves on such things, but were led to them, by the Father, have and do see that glory.

This Objection hath specious words, but weighed

in the ballance of the Sanctuary, will be found lighter than vanity, with the rest of the like nature, which, I hope, is already made manifest, only I shall add a few words by way of Answer.

First, for my Experience as to my self in particular, I confess through the mercy of God it was far short of that which many precious ones in those daies fell into, yet I can truly say it was so much as did clearly discover to me the nature and tendency of them all, to be so vile, that I
do

I do not know any thing that ever I did since I knew God that I can own with more shame to my self than those things.

Secondly, for my experience as to others, I have seen and known that sufficiently to satisfy me, that there is no such glory in them but a meer delusion; but I desire to judge by experience no otherwise than as it hath relation to the holy Scriptures; for though I do very highly esteem of Christian experience as to the operations and effects of truth in the soul, as indeed

it is the very life of Christianity, yet as to rule I value one word of Scripture more than all experience, and I am sure the Scriptures will not own them, which are the rule and touch-stone by which I desire to try and judge all things; For that which the Scripture sets up, they throw down, and that which the Scripture forbids, they set up; for instance, the Scripture exalts the Lord Jesus Christ in all his Actions, Offices and Ordinances, they set up something else in opposition to this, calling it fleshly, carnal, and outward things, and for

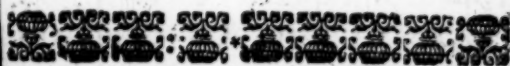
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the fathers leading persons to them, which words carry indeed a seeming shew of excellency, but its a meer delusion, There is no such thing; for the Father and Christ are one, and what was appointed by Christ was appointed by the Father, *John* 10.3. & 14.24. and he doth not lead from his own appointments, but those that continue in them he will love, and he will send his Spirit to them, which shall abide with them for ever, *Joh.* 14.16. and the Father and Christ will come to them, and make their abode with them,

them, *verse* 23. I having already written that which may more fully answer this objection, shall say no more, but desire that all the Lords people may be delivered and kept from such deceivings.



O 2

The

The sixth Note of Experience in relation to Qualifications, the habits of Grace or fruits of the Spirit, how and by what means I have and do daily find an increase or decrease in those things.

TO make way for me to lay down my thoughts as to gracious qualifications, I shall first consider the severall kinds of qualifications, which I conceive may be three, 1. Moral, 2. Legal, 3. Gospel.

By Moral I mean such as are from Moral dictates meerly from nature, Civility, breeding or education.

By Legal I mean such as are from legal dictates, meerly from
fear

fear of wrath, without any cleer apprehensions of the free grace of God in the Gospel. But here I desire to be very tender, judging that it is possible there may be some seeds of the Gospell sown in such hearts, by which those qualifications may be wrought, though as yet it may not appear, neither to themselves nor others, that they have received the Gospel; this only as to possibilities, for ordinarily it is not so.

But thirdly, by Gospel qualifications, I mean such as are from Gospel dictates, from a cleer apprehension of the free grace of God therein, being constrained from the Love of Christ, and in obedience to the commands and authority of Christ, the soul giving up it self in all things to be like him, such as are wrought

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by the Gospel and spirit received they and they only are the fruits of the spirit; but as for those other qualifications, persons that are ignorant of the Gospel, and have not received the Spirit, may be eminent in them which indeed for that they have such a resemblance of the fruits of the Spirit, are great ornaments as to appearance, though as to inward glory they do many times prove miserable ornaments, being props and staies that keep such persons from coming to Christ, and as it was said of the Pharisees, *Mat. 21. 31.* Publicans and Harlots do enter into the Kingdome rather than they; and this I have experienced, that as to my receiving Christ upon Gospel terms, there was nothing so hard to me as to lay aside all those qualifications as I have already

ready

ready exprest in my third and fourth notes of experiences.

Now for the fruits of the spirit what they are, is exprest both in general and particular terms, in general *Ephes. 5. 9.* the fruits of the spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth, more particularly *Gal. 5. 22, 23.* the fruit of the spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance, &c. also there are other things exprest in other terms in Scriptures which doubtless are likewise fruits of the spirit, though I think with submission to better Judgements all others are included in these, whether it be self denial, patience, humility, or the like. These things are excellent ornaments which do adorn Christians in the eyes of men, and do

redound much to the glory of God; and therefore very considerable for Saints to press after them by all means.

I must confess that in the viewing of my own heart I have many times been much grieved to see how short I come in all these things, but especially in some of them, yet through grace I can say I have received a measure of them all, and by experience do know, if my heart deceive me not, wherein I am weak, and wherein strong, and though I am sure in those in which I am strongest I am but weak, considering how I ought to be.

Now I shall speak a little how and by what means according to my experience, and as I judge according to Scripture rule, these things do increase or decrease in Saints.

First

First, I conceive they increase and are strengthened by a close walking with God in all spiritual duties, especially private duties, meditation, self-examination, self-watching, self-judging, self-humbling and prayer, which are indeed such duties, as no hypocrite can truly do, not that these private duties are above publick but that they prepare for publick, and by these we are acquainted with our own hearts, & come to know wherein we are weak, and wherein strong, what we have received, and what we want, and so how to apply our selves to God in publick and private, for the subduing of such a corruption, or for the supply of such or such a grace, and this according to my experience, as I have walked more or less close with God in these private duties, so is my profit.

fit in publique duties, and my
 strength in qualifications, the ha-
 bits of grace more or less, and I
 am confident, that such persons
 as are strangers to these private
 duties, are also strangers to their
 own hearts, and will not make a-
 ny great progress in Christianity;
 for in the omission of these we
 are subject to be exercised in
 things contrary, which do very
 much interrupt our communion
 with God, and so weaken the
 power of every grace in us, or ra-
 ther weaken the power of grace
 in all its effects: for these things
 are not properly graces, but the
 effects of grace, which are vari-
 ous, and so improperly call'd gra-
 ces, as when we do not daily hum-
 ble our selves before the Lord, we
 are subject to exalt our selves be-
 fore men, and when we do not
 watch our own hearts and judge
 our

our selves, we are subject to be judging others, and to watch over them in an evil way, & when we do not dayly meditate on those excellent qualifications that were in Christ himself, we are subject to see little loveliness in them, and so having a slight esteem of them, not to press after them, whereas we are to imitate him in all these things, according to *Mat. 11. 28, 29.* But secondly, The habits of grace, or fruits of the spirit do increase or decrease as we do more or less exercise that measure of them already received, and every particular grace is increased by the exercise of it self, and so by much exercise (I mean by dayly acts) they do as it were become natural, as it is said of *Timothews Phi. 2. 20.* and the exercise of faith doth directly lead us to the fountain of grace,

in

in beholding of which glory of God we are changed into the same image, *1 Cor. 3. 18.* there is such a transforming nature in it, that the very beholding of it transforms us into the same likeness, *Rom. 12. 2.* and I can truly say from blessed experience, that in the exercise of that measure of grace I have received, thus leading me to behold the Lord Jesus in what he hath done for me, I have found it more advantagious for the destroying of corruption, and for the strengthening me in those things, than in any other means whatsoever; and the reason why many persons do sit a long time in the profession of truth, and yet continue weak, ignorant, barren, and fruitless branches, it is because as they are remiss in private duties, so they do not exercise that measure of
 grace

grace received, and so by a heedless, careless, carnall walking, the heart grows carnal, and there is rather a decrease than increase in all spiritual strength.

But some will say, can any do these things of themselves? and doth not God give grace freely both in and after conversion?

To which I answer, yea, but in the work of conversion we are passive, I mean as to inward spiritual activity, we can do nothing being dead, according to *Ephes. 2. 1. 2 Cor. 5. 14. Joh. 5. 25.* not excluding those duties which God requires from all, as hearing the Gospel, reading, &c. through which God hath promised to convey spiritual life, *Esay 55. 3. Rom. 10. 17.* but after conversion we are active, and therefore commanded to keep our selves in the love of God. *Jude 12. To add to our faith*

faith, vertue, to vertue knowledge,
&c. 2 Pet. 1. 5. with many other
such like Scriptures, Not that we
are sufficient of our selves to do any
thing as of our selves, but our suffici-
is of God, 2 Cor. 3. 5. who is
pleased to give in dayly supplies,
and in the dayly exercise of what
we have to give us more, yet all of
grace, freely, and so grace
for grace, as appears in the 1. of
John 6. yet notwithstanding
all that I have written, I judge
that its possible some Saints may
be very diligent in the use of all
means, for the subduing of some
particular corruptions, and for
the supply of some particular
grace, and yet not attain it, but
God is pleased to withhold it
from them, and lest they should
be to much exalted, to leave
some corruption for them to
strive

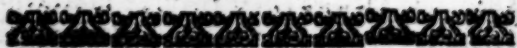
strive, and struggle with, it may
 be as long as they live, which for
 ought I know was *Pauls* very case
 2 *Cor.* 12. 8. and the Lord may ex-
 ercise one grace in us by the want
 of another, yea all by the want
 of one, not that Saints are with-
 out all in their nature, but as to a
 greater measure in some particu-
 lars; and so far as I have experi-
 enced, this though I am still sub-
 ject to suspect my own diligence
 in the use of means, I can truly
 say, That God is never wanting
 in such cases, with supports from
 himself, saying, my grace is suffi-
 cient for thee, my power is made
 manifest in weakness, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9.
 and though sin be in you, it shall
 shall not reign there, neither shall
 it have dominion over you, be-
 cause *yea are not under the law, but*
under Grace, Rom. 6. 11, 12, 11.
 I shall say no more now of these
 things

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things, but beg of God that my
self with all Saints may press
more after them.



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The Conclusion.

HAVING thus far written of my *Experience* in several general heads, which do include many particular Experiments, I had some thoughts to have written of many other things, but my Book being almost full, I shall conclude with a few lines as to Experience it self, what it is, how, and by what means it is attained.

There be various things about which persons may be exercised in way of Experience, yet all may be divided

under one of these two heads,
 its either in relation to the
 world, or in relation to God;
 as to that of the World, its
 all but vanity and vexation of
 spirit. Eccl. 1. 14. and he that
 increaseth knowledge in those
 things, increaseth sorrow, verse
 18. and though there may be
 something of that nature
 convenient for Saints to
 know upon a natural or civil
 account, its but perishing at
 best, and therefore too low
 for them to spend much of
 their precious time and
 thoughts about: Its their pri-
 vilege to have enlarged ex-
 perience in the great things
 of

of God, things that are lasting and durable to eternity; and as godly persons may have experience in some things of the world, so carnal persons may have experience of the dealings of God in some things, as to many outward blessings and deliverances by a common hand of providence, in which they do many times so bless themselves, as if they were highly in favour with God, when the Lord knows it is no such thing, but it may be they have their portion in this life, and are delivered

from a lesser, to be reserved
to a greater destruction.

But as to Experience from
a truesanctified knowledge,
or special work of the Spi-
rit of God, they are altoge-
ther strangers to it, 1 Cor. 2.
14. its only the privilege of
Saints to be eminent in that;
and indeed its a privilege so
great, that I desire for ever to
blefs the Lord that he hath
made me, who am so unwor-
thy, in any measure to par-
take of it; for things meerly
historical or traditional will
vanish and come to nothing,
and so far as we partake of
truth, not onely in its princi-
ples

ples as to the understanding
 of it from Scripture rule, but
 also in its experience as to
 the effects and operations of
 it in our hearts, so far it will
 stand us instead, and so far
 do we attain true wisdom,
 and no farther; and indeed
 as to the effects and opera-
 tions of it in the heart, it is
 the very life of Christianity;
 yet as to rule for the recei-
 ving of any principle one
 word of Scripture is more
 worth than all our experi-
 ence, and as to the avoid-
 ing of evil its better to learn
 that any way, than by the
 experience of it, for so its
 the school of fools; yet wise

men have so learned in some things; now according to my understanding, experience is more than a bare knowledge, it is either a begetter, or an effect of knowledge, and hath alwaies relation to some rule, whether it be in natural or spiritual things; if in natural things, it must answer a rule of nature, if in spiritual, it must answer a spiritual rule, and the holy Scripture is that rule, by which all Christian experience must be tried, according to the Lords own appointment, *Esa. 8. 20.* and all must answer some rule therein

therein exprest or implied;
 by rule in this sense I mean
 the Scriptures, declaring the
 same thing; and as it must
 answer a rule in it self, so an-
 swerable to that knowledge
 and understanding which
 persons have in the rule, so is
 the measure of their experi-
 ence: For though some per-
 sons have much knowledge
 as to principles, and but lit-
 tle experience, yet none can
 have experience of that they
 do not understand, either in
 a principle before they had
 that experience, or else they
 have learned that principle
 by experience; for (as I said

before) all experience is either an effect of knowledge, or by it we learn knowledge, otherwise it cannot be experience ; this I mind the rather, because some persons do please themselves with a conceited experience, though ignorant in the principles of truth, when there cannot be such a thing. I must confess I have been grieved to hear such persons speak of their experience, when it doth appear to me, as it is said of some that would be Preachers of the Law, 1 *Tim.* 1. 7. they know not what they say, nor whereof they at-

affirm, and these are two sorts of persons, first, such as through ignorance of the Scriptures do imagine that to be Christian experience, which doth not answer a rule of Scripture, but is contrary thereto. 2. Such as from corrupt principles, will set up their experience above or equal to the authority of Scripture, as to give a being to institutions, or to make it a rule to judge and try all things, yea the very Scripture it self, when both it and they must be judged thereby. *Rom. 2. 16* There is much corrupt experience in the world, and persons have been

as much mistaken in their experience, especially in these daies, as in any thing I know, and no marvel, when they leave the Scriptures as to rule & walk by the uncertain rule of their own *experience*, which many times is nothing but the *vision* of their own brains; yet notwithstanding the great mistakes of many through corrupt experience, yet true Christian experience is as excellent as ever, and that as I said before is more than a bare knowledge, it is truth brought home to the heart with life and power; by the Spirit of God conforming the *will* in all things to the will

of God, being united to Christ by faith, and so by it we learn many things; First, by experience we find the word of God daily accomplished in us, and are confirmed in our faith and hope, for *experience worketh hope, Rom. 5. 4.* by it we come to be acquainted with our own hearts, and are not so easily deceived by them; by experience we learn how to use our spiritual armor, *Eph. 6. 12, 13, 14.* for offence and defence against the wiles of the devil, not being ignorant of his devises, *2 Cor. 2. 11.* by it we learn wisdom as to the exercise of all spiritual

gifts, and do know what we
 have received, and what we
 want in a measure, and what
 will help or hinder a graci-
 ous frame in us ; also by it
 we learn wisdom as to the
 profiting by all conditions ,
 and as to the answering of all
 relations , and in all these
 persons do many times do
 that for want of experience,
 which after they have more,
 they are ashamed of what
 they have done; and accor-
 ding to that measure of it
 which through grace I have
 attain'd, I have often thought
 that a large experienced
 Christian doth as far excell
 and

and differ from such as have but little experience, as a man differs from a child, and may say as *Iob* did, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eyes see thee*, *Iob* 42. 5. and because experience is a thing so excellent, every one would be eminent in it, or at least they would be thought to be so, when the truth is there are but few that do take a right course to attain it. Now for the way and means by which it is attained, I shall give my thoughts, 1. I conceive its the fruit of much Christian labour after long continuance in the

various conditions. But 2. and chiefly I apprehend it is attained by serious observation and meditation: for though persons may have much knowledge as to the principles of truth, and may continue long in the profession of it, and may be exercised under many changes, yet if they are not serious in their observations, but things come and go with them, and they not regard it, they will never attain to much experience; whereas it may be some that are more serious and observing, that have not bin so long in the truth, or so exercised,

than they, as some children will learn more in a moneth than others in a year, but this is not ordinary; for though persons may be long in the truth, and have but little experience, yet such as are newly come to the faith cannot have much, though never so observing; for which cause young Christians are not to be chosen Church-officers, being subject to be soon overcome by temptations; also let young Christians especially, *Be swift to hear, and slow to speak*, *Iam. 1. 19.* and be more *swift to hear than to offer the sacrifice of fools*, *Eccle. 5. 1.* Seeing it is for that Christian

in its place is a thing so excellent, and that the means by which its attained is by serious observation, I desire with all Saints to give up my self to a serious observation of the dealings of God with us in all conditions, that we may not receive mercies in vain, but that we may treasure them up in our Christian experience, having in our treasury things new and old, that we may be ready upon all occasions to bring it forth, Mat. 13. 52. to the glory and praise of God, & to the profit & comfort of our selves and others, as its our duty so to do, in the name of our Lord, to

